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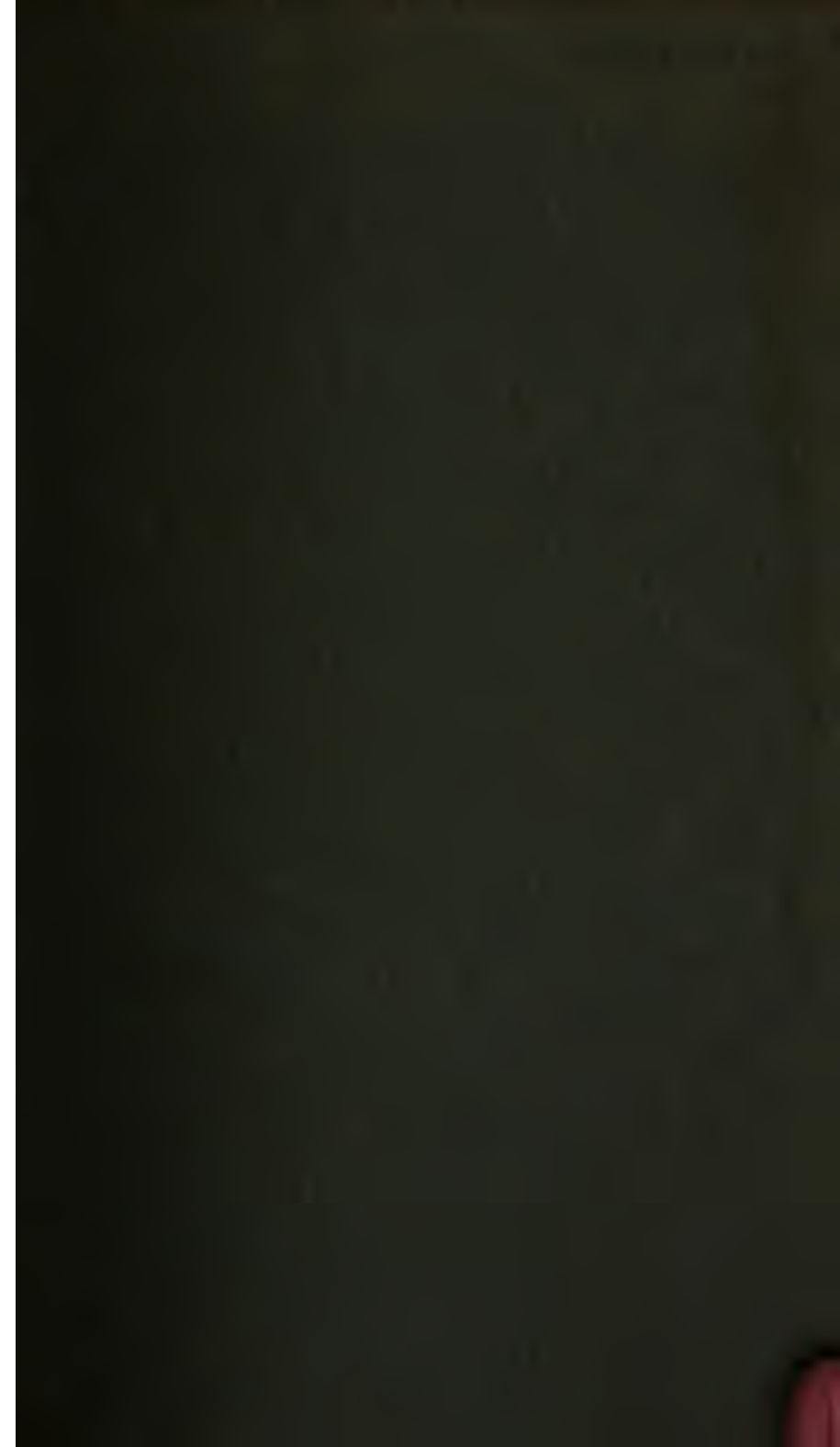
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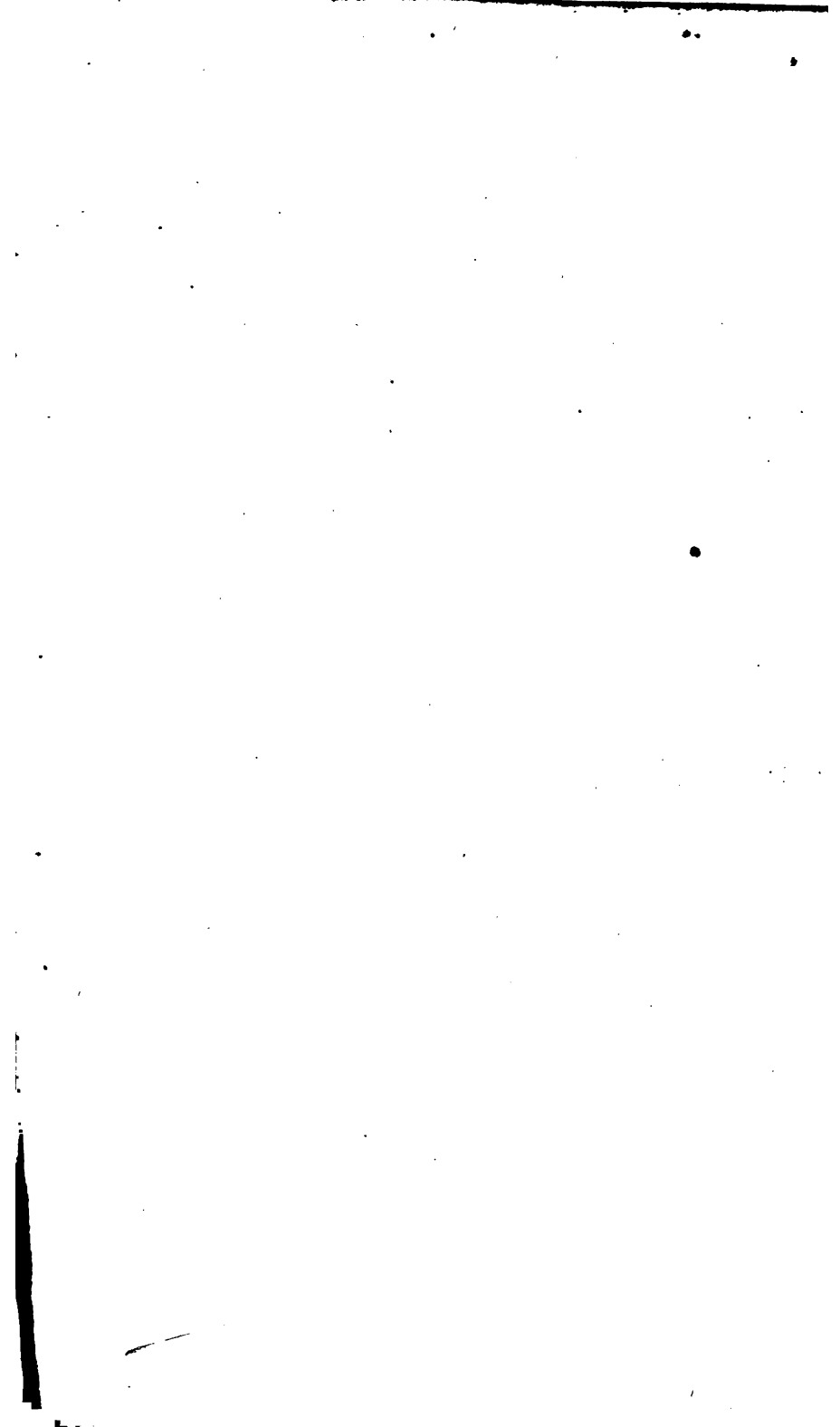
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**LECTURES**  
ON THE  
**FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE**  
OF THE  
**HOLY SCRIPTURE,**

AND THE

*Interpretation of it from the Scripture itself.*

TO WHICH ARE ADDED,

FOUR LECTURES ON THE RELATION BETWEEN THE  
OLD AND NEW TESTAMENTS,

AS IT IS SET FORTH IN

**THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.**

ALSO,

A SINGLE LECTURE ON THE  
**NATURAL EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.**

---

BY WILLIAM JONES, M. A. F. R. S.

AUTHOR OF THE CATHOLIC DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY, &c.

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TO WHICH IS PREFIXED,

A SHORT ACCOUNT OF HIS LIFE AND WRITINGS.

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FIFTH EDITION.

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MDCCCXXI.



# CONTENTS.

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## LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

### LECTURE I.

|  | <i>Page</i> |
|--|-------------|
| INTRODUCTION ; in which it is shewn, how the Language of the Scripture differs from that of other Books ; and whence its obscurity arises, ..... | 1           |

### LECTURE II.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| On the Figures which are found in the Language of the Scripture, and the several kinds of them, ..... | 27 |
|---|----|

### LECTURE III.

|   |    |
|---|----|
| On the Figures of the Scripture which are taken from Nature. (A continuation of the former,)..... | 48 |
|---|----|

### LECTURE IV.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| On the artificial or instituted Figures of the Law of Moses, ..... | 72 |
|--|----|

### LECTURE V.

|  |    |
|--|----|
| Some farther Examples, which shew how the Language of the other Parts of the Scripture is borrowed from the Language of the Law of Moses, and to be interpreted thereby.—The Temple, the Sabbath, Circumcision, clean and unclean Animals, &c.—The wonderful Testimony of the Law to the Religion of Jesus Christ, ..... | 96 |
|--|----|

### LECTURE VI.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| On the Figures of the Scriptures which are borrowed from the Events of the Sacred History,..... | 123 |
|---|-----|

### LECTURE VII.

|   |     |
|---|-----|
| Historical Figures of the Scriptures continued..... | 143 |
|---|-----|



## LIFE OF THE AUTHOR.

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**WILLIAM JONES** was the son of **Morgan Jones**, a Welsh gentleman, descended from **Colonel Jones**, who married a sister of **Oliver Cromwell**, and was born at **Lowick** in **Northamptonshire**, in the year **1726**. He early discovered an inquisitive temper, and industry in acquiring knowledge, and when he was of a proper age, was admitted a scholar at the **Charter-house**, in **London**, where he made a rapid progress in the **Latin** and **Greek** languages. Here also he gave indications of a turn for philosophical studies, and copied some tables and calculations of **Mr. Zachary Williams**, the father of **Dr. Johnson's Mrs. Williams**, belonging to a magnetical theory which that gentleman had formed, but which was never given to the public. When **Mr. Jones** was about eighteen years of age, he was entered of **University College**, **Oxford**, on a **Charter-house** exhibition, and in that seminary pursued the usual course of studies with unremitted diligence: He was admitted to

the degree of B. A. in the year 1749, and soon afterwards received Deacon's orders from the Bishop of Peterborough. In 1751, he was ordained priest by the Bishop of Lincoln, and on quitting the university became curate at Finedon, in Northamptonshire. While he was in this situation, he published, in 1753, his "Full Answer to Bishop Clayton's Essay on Spirit," or rather the essay which his lordship adopted; in which he endeavoured to support the cause of orthodoxy by an appeal to the religion and learning of heathen antiquity, particularly the notions of the Hermetic, Pythagorean, and Platonic trinities.

In the year 1754, he formed a happy matrimonial connection, and went to reside at Wadenhoe in Northamptonshire, as curate to his brother-in-law, the Rev. Brooke Bridges. In this place he drew up and published, in what year we are not informed, his "Catholic Doctrine of the Trinity," octavo; which was favourably received by the orthodox world, and was enlarged in the third edition, which appeared in 1767, by a "Letter to the common people, in answer to some popular Arguments against the Trinity." Here also he engaged in a course of experiments, neces-



sary to his composing a treatise on philosophy, in elucidation of his favourite system ; and met with liberal friends, who, by a subscription among themselves of three hundred pounds per annum for three years, enabled him to furnish himself with such an apparatus as he wanted. The result of his labours was " An Essay on the First Principles of Natural Philosophy," published in 1762, quarto, intended to demonstrate the use of natural means, or second causes, in the economy of the material world, from reason, experiments, and the testimony of antiquity. It was designed as a preparatory work, to obviate the objections against the system for which he was an advocate, founded on the Newtonian philosophy ; and it displayed considerable learning and ingenuity, as well as an ardent attachment to the interests of piety and virtue, united with the eccentric peculiarities of the Hutchinsonian school. The Earl of Bute was so well satisfied with it, that he desired the author not to be intimidated through fear of the expense from pursuing his philosophical studies, but to direct Mr. Adams, the mathematical instrument-maker, to supply him with such instruments as he might want, and to place them to his lordship's account.

In the year 1764, Archbishop Secker presented Mr. Jones to the vicarage of Bethersden in Kent, whither he removed with his family ; and when he afterwards found that the income of his benefice was not equal to what he expected, in pursuance of the advice of his friends, he undertook the tuition of a few pupils. For such an office he was well qualified by his skill in the learned languages, his various knowledge, his great industry, and his perspicuous easy manner of communicating instruction. In the year 1765, Archbishop Secker presented Mr. Jones to the rectory of Pluckley, in the same county, where he took up his residence, and continued his plan of education, pursuing at the same time his course of philosophical experiments, as well as theological studies, and discharging his pastoral duties with exemplary zeal and diligence. In the year 1769, he published a letter to " A Young Gentleman at Oxford, intended for Holy Orders, containing some seasonable Cautions against Errors in Doctrine," octavo ; consisting, chiefly, of the substance of a visitation sermon preached before Archbishop Secker in 1766. His subsequent publications, during his continuance at Pluckley, were, some remarks on the principles and spirit of " The Confessional," an-

nexed to a new edition of his "Answer to an Essay on Spirit," &c. 1773, octavo; "Zoologia Ethica: a Disquisition concerning the Mosaic Distinction of Animals, clean and unclean; being an Attempt to explain to Christians, the Wisdom, Morality, and Use of that Institution, in two Parts," 1772, octavo; "Three Dissertations on Life and Death, 1772, octavo; a volume of "Disquisitions on some select Subjects of Scripture," which had been before separately printed, 1773, octavo; and "Reflections on the Growth of Heathenism among Christians, in a Letter to a Friend at Oxford, by a Presbyterian of the Church of England," 1776, octavo. About this time Mr. Jones was induced to move from Pluckley, and to accept of the perpetual curacy of Nayland, in Suffolk. Soon afterwards he effected an exchange of Pluckley, for the rectory of Paston in Northamptonshire, which he visited annually; but took up his abode at Nayland, which no future offer of preferment tempted him to quit. In the mean time he had entered a member of Sydney College in the university of Cambridge, where he was admitted to the degree of M. A.—From the title of his next publication, Mr. Jones appears to have been admitted a Fellow of the Royal Society; but we have no infor-

mation concerning the time when this honour was conferred upon him. The work to which we allude was his "Physiological Disquisitions, or, Discourses concerning the Natural Philosophy of the Elements," 1781, quarto. This performance contains discourses on matter, and the several kinds of bodies; on the nature and causes of motion; on the nature and uses of the elements; on fire, its properties and effects; on the nature and properties of air; on the philosophy of musical sounds; on fossil bodies; on physical geography, or, the natural history of the earth; and on the appearances, causes, and prognostic signs, of the weather. They contain much instructive, much entertaining, and much fanciful matter, ingeniously applied in an attempt to investigate the causes of things, and to construct a theory of nature on the principles of the author's favourite system. Mr. Jones's next publication was theological, and consisted of "Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Holy Scripture, and the Interpretation of it from the Scripture itself," 1788, octavo; which contain a mixture of judicious and valuable explanations of Scripture metaphors, with others in which the author has given full scope to his lively imagination.

In discharging the duties of his pastoral office, Mr. Jones paid particular attention to the young people of his parish, whom he instructed privately in his own house, and publicly in the church, by a course of catechetical lectures adapted to their capacities; and as he was zealously attached to the establishment, of which he was a minister, he endeavoured to secure their adherence to its communion, not only by the representations which he laid before them of the nature of the church, and the sinfulness of schism, but by different small treatises, such as "An Essay on the Church," the "Churchman's Catechism," &c. That these labours were not inefficacious among his parishioners, he had reason to conclude from the increase which he had the satisfaction to see in the number of those who attended at the sacrament. In the year 1790, our author published two volumes of "Sermons on moral and religious Subjects," octavo; which are chiefly of a practical and useful tendency, and include some discourses on natural history, delivered at Mr. Fairchild's annual lecture at Shoreditch Church, of which the preacher is appointed by the Royal Society. They reflect credit on the author's piety and benevolence; but his fondness for the introduction

into them of allegories and spiritual allusions, renders many of his remarks and illustrations not easily intelligible to plain and common readers. In the year 1792, alarmed for the safety of the British constitution, which he conceived to be in danger from the growing prevalence of democratical principles, and also for the existence of the established church and creed, against which he was led to believe that the assiduity of sectaries, free inquirers, and unbelievers, was directed, Mr. Jones employed his pen in the service of high-church politics. He was the author of "A Letter from Thomas Bull to his Brother John," which was industriously circulated throughout the kingdom by the friends of administration; and he drew up and published the prospectus of a plan of a society "for the reformation of principles," the establishment of which he had long meditated. To whatever cause it was owing, however, his efforts to form such a society did not succeed. In connexion with those efforts he gave birth to "The British Critic;" and published a collection of tracts by Charles Leslie, Mr. Law, Mr. Norris, Roger North, Bishop Horne, our author, &c. in two volumes octavo, under the title of "The Scholar armed against the

Errors of the Time ; or, a Collection of Tracts on the Principles and Evidence of Christianity, the Constitution of the Church, and Authority of Civil Government." During the year last mentioned, Mr. Jones met with a severe loss in the death of his intimate friend, Bishop Horne, to whom he was chaplain, and whose life he undertook the task of recording. This work made its appearance in the year 1795, entitled, "Memoirs of the Life, Studies, and Writings of the Right Rev. George Horne, D. D. late Lord Bishop of Norwich," octavo ; which, though it cannot be commended as a very regular and well-digested biographical production, is written, on the whole, in an interesting and pleasing manner, and contains a warm and affectionate tribute of respect to the memory of that prelate. To a second edition of it, published in 1799, Mr. Jones prefixed a consise exposition of Mr. Hutchinson's leading theological and philosophical opinions.

Our author now was become advanced in age, and was obliged by his infirmities to discontinue his practice of taking pupils. That he might not be subjected to any inconvenience from the dimunition of his income which

was thus created, in the year 1798, the Archbishop of Canterbury benevolently presented him to the sinecure rectory of Hollingbourn in Kent; which, however, he did not live long to enjoy. The last publication which he sent into the world was "A Discourse on the Use and Intention of some remarkable Passages of the Scriptures, not commonly understood; addressed to the Readers of a Course of Lectures on the Figurative Language of the Holy Scriptures," 1799, octavo. Soon after this, he sustained a heavy loss by the death of his wife, which plunged him in deep affliction; and that trial was in a short time followed by a paralytic attack, which deprived him of the use of one side. His faculties however remained uninjured, and he speedily recovered so far as to be able to walk with a stick, and to write. In this infirm state of body he lived some months, and at length expired, without a sigh or a groan, February 6, 1800, in the seventy-fourth year of his age.

Mr. Jones's learning was very respectable; his attachment to what he considered to be truth, steady and zealous; his piety ardent and animated; his moral conduct not only irreproachable but highly exemplary; and his



temper and manners placid, humble, and obliging. As far as his means extended, he delighted in doing good; and towards his flock he uniformly behaved as a vigilant affectionate pastor. To his other knowledge he added that of physic, which he commendably applied to the relief and comfort of his poorer neighbours. Of the establishment, of which he was a minister, he was an intrepid champion, on what are commonly called high-church principles; and of the theologico-philosophical system of the Hutchinsonian school he is justly considered to be the most ingenious and plausible defender. Besides the pieces enumerated in the preceding narrative, he published numerous single sermons, and occasional tracts. We have only to add, that Mr. Jones was a proficient in the theory and practice of music; and that he composed a morning and evening cathedral-service, ten church-pieces for the organ, with four anthems in score for the use of the church of Nayland, which are said to be greatly admired, as of the old school, and in the true classical style.



# LECTURE I.

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THE

## INTRODUCTION:

IN WHICH IT IS SHEWN, HOW THE LANGUAGE OF  
THE SCRIPTURE DIFFERS FROM THAT OF OTHER  
BOOKS; AND WHENCE ITS OBSCURITY ARISES.

**W**HEN the Maker of the world becomes an author, his word must be as perfect as his work: the glory of his wisdom must be declared by the one as evidently as the glory of his power is by the other: and if nature repays the philosopher for his experiments, the scripture can never disappoint those who are properly exercised in the study of it.

The world which God hath made is open to every eye; but to look upon the works of nature, and to look into the ways of nature, are very different things; the latter of which is the result of much labour and observation. If the economy of nature is not to be learned from a transient inspection of the heavens and the earth; and if the ground will not yield

#### 4      *On the Figurative Language*    LECT. 1.

did not penetrate beyond the surface. And as our Saviour preached to them in the same way as Moses and the prophets had written, (of which we shall see more hereafter,) they were as much at a loss for the meaning of his discourses, as for the true sense of the law and the prophets. The same defect may be in us at this day, and certainly is in many, although we have the scripture in our mother-tongue; a blessing which was denied to us so long as we were under the authority of the Church of Rome. If a man hears the Bible all his life with a Jewish mind, he will know no more of it at last than the Jews do. The son of Adam will be left as ignorant as the son of Abraham, unless his heart and understanding are opened to admit the principles of the Christian Revelation. It is vain to argue about the superstructure, so long as the foundation is disputed, either through ignorance or disaffection.

This obscurity then in the word of God doth not arise from the language or the grammar; for so far the Bible, like other books, is the subject of critical industry: and much useful labour hath been employed by learned and pious men in clearing the letter of the scripture from the ambiguities to which all

language is subject. The difficulties under which the Jew laboured were not grammatical difficulties; and whatever these may be in the original, they are removed for all common readers by the translation of the Bible into their mother-tongue. The great difficulties of the scripture arise totally from other causes and principles; namely, from the *matter* of which it treats, and the various *forms* under which that matter is delivered.

Let us consider, first, how the case stands with respect to the *matter* of the scripture; and then, secondly, with respect to the form or *manner* in which that matter is represented.

The Bible treats of a dispensation of God, which began before this world, and will not be finished till the world is at an end, and the eternal kingdom of God is established. It informs us of the institution of religion in paradise, with the original dependence of man upon his maker: of a primitive state of man under a former covenant, which is now forfeited: of his temptation and fall: of the causes of death, and the promise of redemption. It founds a ritual on the remission of sin by the shedding of blood, and the benefits of intercession; which the heathens also acknowledged in the traditionary rites of their

**6      *On the Figurative Language*      LECT. 1.**

priesthood. It relates the dispersion of the Gentile nations, and the separation of the Hebrews. It foretels the manifestation of a Saviour in the flesh; the rejection of the Jews; the calling and conversion of the Heathens; the establishment of the Christian Church, with its preservation against the powers of the world, and the gates of hell. It treats of a spiritual life, and renewed affections in its members; that they must even be born again in a spiritual manner, and return to a state of childish simplicity in their understandings; it assures us of the resurrection of the body after death; of the future judgment of the world by the man Jesus Christ; of the glorification of the faithful, and the condemnation of the wicked. It opens to us an invisible world of spirits, some of whom are in alliance with God, and others in rebellion against him; assuring us withal, that every man will have his final portion with the one party or the other.

None of these things are known to us by nature; and it is not pretended that they are; for if man draws a scheme of religion for himself, not one of all these articles finds a place in it. Therefore as the nature of man doth not know any of these things till God reveals them, it must of course be under two very

great difficulties; first, of understanding or comprehending; and, secondly, of admitting or receiving them.

From the difficulty we are under of comprehending such things as are above natural reason, the manner of the scripture is as extraordinary as its matter: and it must be so from the necessity of the case. Of all the objects of sense we have ideas, and our minds and memories are stored with them. But of invisible things we have no ideas till they are pointed out to us by revelation: and as we cannot know them immediately, such as they are in themselves, after the manner in which we know sensible objects, they must be communicated to us by the mediation of such things as we already comprehend. For this reason, the scripture is found to have a language of its own, which doth not consist of words, but of signs or figures taken from visible things. It could not otherwise treat of God who is a spirit, and of the spirit of man, and of a spiritual world; which no words can describe. Words are the arbitrary signs of natural things; but the language of revelation goes a step farther, and uses some things as the signs of other things; in consequence of which, the world which we now see becomes

a sort of commentary on the mind of God, and explains the world in which we believe.

It being then the professed design of the scripture to teach us such things as we neither see nor know of ourselves, its style and manner must be such as are no where else to be found. It must abound with figurative expressions; it cannot proceed without them: and if we descend to an actual examination of particulars, we find it assisting and leading our faculties forward; by an application of all visible objects to a figurative use; from the glorious orb which shines in the firmament, to a grain of seed which is buried in the earth. In this sort of language did our blessed Saviour instruct his hearers; always referring them to such objects as were familiar to their senses, that they might see the propriety and feel the force of his doctrine. This method he observed, not in compliance with any customary figures of speech peculiar to the Eastern people, but consulting the exigence of human nature, which is every where the same. He spake a sort of language which was to be carried out into all lands; and which we of the western world are obliged to follow in our preaching of the gospel, because we cannot otherwise preach it so as to be understood by



our hearers. Here I find it necessary to confirm what I have advanced by some examples.

As we have but imperfect notions of the relations and differences between *life* and *death*, our Saviour, when he was about to raise a maid to life, said to those who were present, *the damsel is not dead, but sleepeth*. He did not say, she is dead, and I will raise her to life; but she is asleep; whence it was to be inferred that she would awake. They who were not skilled in the divine language of signs and figures, laughed him to scorn; as if he had spoken in ignorance what was expressed with consummate truth and wisdom: for the substitution of sleep for death, when we have it upon such great authority, has the force and value of an whole sermon in a single word: it is a seed from whence a tree of life may be unfolded.

Upon another like occasion our Saviour expressed himself in the same manner to his disciples; *our friend Lazarus sleepeth*; and when they did not understand the force of his words, he said plainly, *Lazarus is dead*. When he spake of the deadness of the mind, a state, which, however real, must always be invisible, because the mind itself is so; he expressed it under the same term with the death of

the body; *let the dead bury their dead*; of which expression no sense can be made by those who are not aware, that the scripture speaks to us by things instead of words. Admit this principle, and then all is clear and consistent. It is as if Christ had said, "Let those who are dead in their spirits, (with respect to the *new life* of the gospel,) employ themselves in burying those who are dead in body; for they are fit for nothing else: but by following me, and preaching the gospel, thou shalt raise men from the death of sin unto the life of righteousness."

In the writings of the prophets, the spiritual blessings of the gospel are so constantly described under some allusion to nature, that their expressions are not true till they are figuratively interpreted. Let us take an example from the Prophet Isaiah: *Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low, and the crooked shall be made strait, and the rough places plain.* Who ever heard that this was literally fulfilled? In what part of the world were all the mountains levelled; the vallies filled up; the crooked and rough places made strait and plain? But in the figurative sense all these things were to be brought to pass in the minds of men at the publication

of the gospel, when *all flesh should see the salvation of God.\** Then should the high and mighty of this world be confounded and brought low; the humble should be exalted, the meek encouraged, the crooked ways of men rectified, their wild and rugged tempers softened and civilized.

The Bible has farther difficulties arising from another principle. For it pleased God, for wise ends, to exercise the faith and devotion of his people with a system of forms and ceremonies, which had no value but from their signification. I mention no particulars here, because they will occur to us abundantly hereafter; but the fact is undoubted from that general assertion of St. Paul, that *the law had a shadow of good things to come:†* and again, that the instituted meats and drinks, the holy days, new moons and sabbaths, of the law, are *a shadow of things to come*, having their substance in the doctrines and mysteries of Christianity; or, as the apostle speaks, whose *body is of Christ.‡* And therefore in the gospel, things are still described to us in the terms of the law; the substance itself taking the language of the shadow, that the design of both may be understood: as where the

\* Luke iii. 6.

† Heb. x. 1.

‡ Col. ii. 17.

the apostle saith, *Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us*, &c. from the application of which term to the person of Christ, we are taught, under this one word of the *passover*, that he is to us a *lamb* in meekness and innocence of manners; pure and *spotless* from every stain of sin; *slain* (and that without the *breaking of his bones*) for the *redemption* of his people from the wrath of the destroyer; and *feeding* with his body those who put away all *leaven* from their hearts.

But now, beside this first difficulty, which we are under, of *comprehending* the *matter* of the scripture from the peculiar *manner* in which it is delivered, we are under a second difficulty as to the *receiving* of it; without which our understanding of it will be very imperfect, if any at all. For the force of men's minds is generally found to be according to their affections; for which reason the disaffection of the Jew is attended with a very conspicuous weakness of the understanding. We may lay it down as a certain truth, confirmed by the experience of all men, that when any object is admitted into the mind, it must find a faculty there which corresponds with its own peculiar nature. When there is no appetite, the sweetest meat is of no value, and even the

sight and savour of it may be disagreeable. When there is neither ear nor skill in music, heavenly sounds give no delight; and with the blind the beams of the sun give no beauty to the richest prospect. It is thus in every other case of the kind. The mathematician and logician apply to the intuitive faculty of reason; the poet to the imagination or mirror of the mind; the orator to the sensibility of the affections; the musician to the musical ear. The mathematician demonstrates nothing but to patient and attentive reason; to the imagination which is dull, the poet is a trifle; on the hard and unfeeling heart, the orator makes no impression; and the sweetest music is referred to the class of noises, where there is no sense of harmony. Thus when God speaks of things which are above nature, his meaning must be received by a faculty which is not the gift of nature, but superadded to nature by the gift of God himself. For spiritual truth there must be a spiritual sense; and the scripture calls this sense by the name of *faith*; which word sometimes signifies the act of believing; sometimes the matter which is believed; but in many passages it is used for that sense or capacity in the intellect, by which the invisible things of the Spirit of God are admitted and approved.

It is a doctrine which may occasion some mortification to human pride, and it seldom fails to do so; but no doctrine of the gospel of Jesus Christ is more decided than this, that *all men have not faith*; that it is the *gift of God* wherever it is found; and that the *natural man*, or man with no powers but those of our common nature, *receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God*: so far from it, that they seem foolish, extravagant, and incredible, and are rejected with mockery and contempt by men who can write a pleasant style, and who seem to be in other respects (within the sphere of their affections) very sensible and ingenious persons. On what other ground but that of the scriptural distinction between faith and natural reason, is it possible to account for a fact which so frequently occurred at the first publication of the gospel; when the same speech, the same reasoning, yea, and the same miracle, had a totally different effect on the minds of different hearers, all present on the same occasion? When Peter and John healed the lame man at the gate of the temple, and all the people were spectators of the fact, the apostles addressed themselves in a powerful discourse to those who were present; the lame man still cleaving to them, and standing

by them as a witness : and thus they made some thousands of converts to the word of the gospel. But behold, the Sadducees were *grieved* at the doctrine of the resurrection, though preached with all the force of truth from their own scriptures, and attended with the credential of an indisputable miracle ; which only vexed and distressed them the more. At Athens, the philosophers of the place, proud of their Grecian talent for oratory and disputation, considered the matter of Paul's preaching merely as a new thing, which gave them an opportunity of questioning and wrangling. Some called him a babbler ; some said they would hear him again ; some mocked at the resurrection of the dead ; while Dionysius, one of their senators, Damaris, and some others, clave unto them and *believed* : in other words, they received the gospel with that faculty of the spirit, which alone is susceptible of it. Till there is in man the sense which receiveth these things, the book which treats of them will not be understood. If they are rejected, we must conclude this sense to be wanting ; and when that is the case, the evidence of a miracle will not force its way through the hardness of the human heart.— Some speculative writers have treated of cre-

dibility and probability, and the nature, and force, and degrees, of evidence, as if we had rules for weighing all truth to a single grain with mechanical certainty : whereas in fact, man, with all his boasted balancings of reason, can resist a proof that would confound a devil. Compare the following examples :—The Jews said, “ As for this fellow, we know not whence he is.” The devils said, “ I know thee who thou art, the holy one of God.” The Jews said, that Christ cast out devils through Beelzebub their prince : but the devils never said so themselves. The sun of the noon-day shines without effect upon the blind, because the proper sense is wanting : so saith the Evangelist, *the light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehendeth it not.* Vicious inclinations and habits of sin, which render truth disagreeable, are sure to have the effect of weakening and perverting the judgment ; *this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.* The understanding of truth implies a love of truth ; and the understanding will be deficient so long as that love is wanting. None are so blind as they who are so by choice ; that is to say, the ignorant are never found to be so absurd as the disaf-



fect. The word of God is in itself all-sufficient for the illumination of the mind; it is a seed quick and vigorous with the principles of life; but, like other seeds, it must find something congenial with itself in the soil into which it falls. The word spoken did not profit the Jews, because it was not *mixed with faith in them that heard it*; there was nothing in the soil to give it nourishment and growth.

The distinction which the scripture hath made between natural and spiritual men; that is, between men that have faith and men that have none, is agreeable to what hath been observed from the beginning of the world; that there have been two classes of people, all sprung from the same original, but totally different in their views, principles, and manners. Before the flood, they were distinguished as the children of Cain, and the children of Seth; the latter of whom inherited the faith of Abel. After the flood, we find them again under the denomination of Hebrews and Heathens. In the gospel, they appear to us as the *children of this world*, and the *children of light*: the former, cunning and active in their generation for the interests of this life; the other, wise towards God and the things of eternity. These two run on together, like

two parallel lines, through the history of this world; always near to one another, but never meeting. Whoever considers this fact, will not be at a loss for a reason, why the wisdom of God in the scripture is so differently accepted in the world.

Having thus endeavoured to shew that the scripture must have its difficulties, and whence they arise; we shall obtain some farther light, if we inquire what the scripture hath said concerning itself.

The great apostle thus distinguishes between the language of revelation, and the words of human wisdom. "We speak the wisdom of God *in a mystery*, even the *hidden wisdom*, which none of the princes of this world knew; for had they known it, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory." "By which he means, that the priests and rulers who stood up against the Lord, did so for want of understanding that sense of the scripture which is hidden under the signs and symbols of it, in a way totally different from the wisdom of this world, and which the *natural* man \* can neither see nor admit. The word *mystery*, in a vulgar acceptation, is applied to such things

\* 1 Cor. ii. 14.

as are dark and unintelligible: but to *speake in a mystery*, as the phrase is used in the scripture, is to reveal some sacred and heavenly doctrine under some outward and visible sign of it: and thus the sacraments of the church being outward signs with an inward and spiritual meaning, are also to be understood as mysteries. This sense of the word *mystery* is ascertained by that passage in the Revelation; *the mystery of the seven stars which thou sawest in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks: the seven stars are the angels of the seven churches; and the seven candlesticks which thou sawest are the seven churches.* To signify a church holding forth the light of the gospel, by that domestic instrument of illumination which holds a candle; and to signify a ruler or teacher by a star which gives light from the firmament of heaven, is to speak under the form of a mystery; which is not necessarily unintelligible, because it is here explained. So in another place; *this is a great mystery*, saith the apostle, *but I speak concerning Christ and the church.* To teach us the union betwixt Christ and the Church, for the bringing forth of sons to glory, under the similitude of Adam and Eve united in paradise for the multiplying of mankind upon earth, is also

to speak in a mystery. The sorceress in the Revelation,\* who is called by the name of Babylon, hath the word MYSTERY inscribed with that name upon her forehead; because Babylon is there not literal, but figurative or mystical, to denote that abomination of *idolatry*, by the *sorceries* of which *all nations were deceived*:† She sitteth on a *scarlet-coloured beast*, supported by the imperial powers of this world, called, the *kings of the earth*; and the *wine* in her cup is the false doctrine with which she intoxicates the minds of men.

This *hidden wisdom* of the scripture is to be considered as treasure hid in the earth, for which men must search with that same zeal and labour with which they penetrate into a mine of gold: for when our Saviour commands us to *search the scriptures* for their testimony of himself, the language of the precept implies that kind of searching by which gold and silver are discovered under ground. He who doth not search the word of God in that manner, and with that spirit, for what is to be found underneath it, will never discover its true value. The same principle is inculcated with a like allusion, when the divine

\* Chap. xvii.

† Chap. xii. 23.

law is compared to honey and the honey comb; an inward sense being therein hidden, as when the bee seals up its treasure in the cells of wax: and the one when taken out is as sweet to the understanding as the other is to the palate. It is also as the corn in the husk, which must be taken from thence by the labour of the ox on the threshing-floor, (as the custom was of old,) before it can support the life of man. As the disciples of Christ plucked the ears of corn, and rubbed them in their hands on the Sabbath-day, so should every Christian preacher handle the word of God before it can give nourishment to their hearers. The labour of the ministry is certainly alluded to in that precept relating to the threshing-floor, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox when he treadeth out the corn*: for the apostle seems to wonder how any could be so absurd as to suppose that God considered nothing but the benefit of the beast on this occasion; as if he had *care of oxen*, when he undoubtedly meant to assign the reward, and signify the work of his *ministers, who labour in the word and doctrine*. It is the work of the ministry to expound the word of God, as the labouring ox in the threshing-floor treadeth out the grain from the chaff: and as the ox

is not muzzled at such a time, but partakes freely of the fruits of his labour; so, by parity of justice, they who preach the word have a right to live of it.

That there is both a plain and a figurative sense in the language of the scripture, particularly in the law, is clear from the apostle's reasoning on another occasion. He gives a name to each of these, distinguishing them under the contrary terms of the *letter* and the *spirit*: which terms are not unfrequently applied in the language of civil life to the laws of the land, in which there is a literal sense of the words, and a deeper sense of their general *intention*, called the spirit, which the letter cannot always reach.

The *letter* of the Scripture is applied to the outward institutions and ceremonies of the law, as they stand in the words of the law without their interpretation: the *spirit* of them, or the *intention* of the lawgiver, is the same with the doctrine of the New Testament, called elsewhere *the good things to come*, of which the law had an image and shadow. In its washings and purifications we see the doctrine of *baptism*; that is, of regeneration by water and the Spirit of God.\* In its sacrifices we

\* Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

see the necessity and efficacy of Christ's death once for all. Had it not been necessary for man to be born of the Spirit, and redeemed by the blood of Christ, the law would not have troubled the people with washings and sacrifices; for in that case they would have signified nothing, and consequently would have been superfluous and impertinent: whereas if we take them right, the services of the law are the gospel in figurative description, and the gospel is the law in spirit and signification. The passover of the law is a sign of Christ that was to come; and Christ when he is come is the sense and signification of the passover. It is the duty of a Christian minister not to disappoint the law or the gospel, but to do justice to the wisdom of God in both, and put these things together, for the edification of the people. "Our sufficiency, saith the apostle, is of God, who hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, *not of the letter but of the spirit*: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life." The letter of the law, voided of its evangelical intention, leaves our bodies washed, but our souls unclean; it leaves us nothing but the blood of bulls and of goats, and consequently under guilt and forfeiture; whence the apostle hath

truly affirmed, that in this capacity it is a *ministration of death*. In his reasonings with the Jews, he presses them with the unreasonableness and wickedness of resting in the literal observation of the law; telling them, that *by the letter and circumcision they transgressed the law*. But how could this be? Did not the law ordain circumcision in the letter? It did undoubtedly: yet, however paradoxical it may appear, the literal observation of the law was a transgression of the law. From whence it is a necessary consequence, that the letter of the law was ordained only for the sake of its spirit or moral intention; which the Jew neglecting, while he trusted in the law as a form, was in effect a transgressor of it; and was condemned in his error by the Gentiles, who, without being born under the letter of the law, had now attained to the spirit of it, and were better Jews than the Jews themselves: for, adds the apostle, *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision, which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision (as Moses himself had taught\*) is that of the heart, in the spirit and not in the letter*.

\* Deut. x. xvi.



To inquire more particularly into the errors of the Jews and the causes of them, would be foreign to my design. The fact is plain, that they erred by a literal interpretation of their law; and that by still adhering to the same, they are no nearer to the gospel now than they were seventeen hundred years ago. On the other hand, the apostles of Jesus Christ succeeded in their labours by being *ministers of the spirit*; that is, by interpreting and reasoning according to an inward or figurative sense in the law, the prophets, and the psalms. All the Fathers of the Christian Church followed their example; particularly *Origen*, one of the most useful and powerful of primitive expositors. Then were the Jews confounded, the Heathens converted, the word of God was efficacious, and the people were edified. The same way of teaching was observed in the middle ages, till the times of the Reformation; and even then our best scholars still drew their divine oratory, particularly the learned and accomplished *Erasmus*, from the spiritual wisdom of the first ages. To revive and promote which, within my own little sphere, is the design of this and the following lectures: in all which I shall invariably follow the rule of making the scripture its own interpreter.

And now I have opened the way by shewing in what respects and for what reasons the style of the scripture differs from that of other books, and that it is symbolical or figurative; I propose, with God's leave, to distinguish the figures of the scripture into their proper kinds, with examples and explanations in each kind, from the scripture itself.

## LECTURE II.

ON THE FIGURES WHICH ARE FOUND IN THE LANGUAGE OF THE SCRIPTURE, AND THE SEVERAL KINDS OF THEM.

It hath been shewn in the former Lecture, that as the scripture teaches spiritual things which cannot be taught in words, the wisdom of God hath made use of *things*, as signs and figures, to explain them. This is done for several reasons: first, because we cannot conceive things of a spiritual nature but by borrowing our notions of them from the things that are visible and familiar to our senses. Secondly, because the scripture can speak under this form to some men, and reveal many things to them, while the same words reveal nothing to others: like that pillar in the wilderness, which was a cloud of darkness to the Egyptians, while it gave light to the Hebrews. Thirdly, because an outward sign, such as those of the scripture are, becomes a pledge and an evidence of the thing signified; as it doubtless is a wonderful confirmation of the gospel to see its mysteries exactly delineated so long before in the services of the law of

Moses ; and much more to see them written in the characters of nature itself.

The things, which the scripture uses as figures of other things, are taken, 1. From the natural creation, or world of sensible objects. 2. From the institutions of the law. 3. From the persons of the prophets and holy men of old time. 4. From the history of the church. 5. From the actions of inspired men, which in many instances were not only miracles, but *signs* of something beyond themselves, and conformable to the general plan of our salvation and redemption.

These are the materials of that figurative language in which the Bible is written ; and of the several kinds of them, as here distinguished, I shall treat in their order, after I have given a general description of each.

1. When any object is taken from the visible creation, and applied as an illustration or sign of some spiritual truth, we call it a natural image. The scripture calls them *similitudes* ; as in that passage of the prophet Hosea,—*I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.\** A discourse made up of such is called *a parable* ; a form of

\* Hosea xii. 10.

speech which our Saviour as a divine teacher thought most agreeable to the nature of his own preaching, and to the wants of his hearers. In which, however, he only did what the scripture had always done; he instructed the eyes of the understanding by placing some natural object before them; and as the visible world throughout is a pattern of the invisible, the figures of the sacred language built upon the images of nature, are as extensive as the world itself; so that it would be a vain undertaking to interpret all the figures which are reducible to this class.

2. Other figures are borrowed from the institutions of the ceremonial law, which are applied to the things of the gospel; and in this capacity the law is all figure. It is nothing considered in itself but a copy, *a shadow of good things to come*; and as a shadow, it had only the *form*, not the *substance*, (or *very image*, as the scripture calls it,) of the things hoped for. Its elements were like those of the gospel in form; and therefore it was a *school-master*, a teacher of such elements as prepared the mind for the reception of a spiritual dispensation, in which its shadows are now realized.

When our Saviour Jesus Christ is called a Priest, a character is given to him, which can-

not be understood till we go back to the law. There we see what a priest was, and what he did; and thence we learn the nature of our Saviour's priestly office. And as the whole law, in its ritual, consisted chiefly of priestly ministration; then, if the priest himself was figurative, his ministration was so likewise, and consequently the law was a pattern of the gospel.

3. The things relating to our Saviour's Person, that is, to his birth, dignity, actions, sufferings, death, resurrection, and glorification, were foreshewn in the history of other great and remarkable persons, who, in the former ages of the church, were saviours upon occasion to their people, or examples of persecuted innocence, truth, and holiness, as he was to be. Such persons acting, or suffering, or triumphing, in this prophetic capacity, are called *types*. In the gospel they are called *signs*; and as a specimen for the present, we may take the two characters of *Jonah* and *Solomon*, as referred to in the 11th chapter of *St. Luke*. Our Saviour\* proposed *Jonah* to the Jews as a *sign* of his own future resurrection. This prophet went down into the mouth

\* Matth. xli. 40.

of a monster, as Christ was to be swallowed up like other men by the devouring jaws of death. As the prophet was detained there three days, Christ was so long to be confined to the sepulchre: and as Jonah was restored to the light at the Divine command, so was Christ to rise again from the dead. Jonah was therefore a sign of his death and resurrection, such as no words could have delivered; for a miraculous fact is best signified by a miraculous sign, which shews us that the thing was known and determined before it came to pass.

Such another sign was *Solomon*; the fame of whose wisdom brought the Queen of Sheba from a Heathen land to hear his words, and wonder at the greatness of his kingdom, and admire the order of his government: a sign that the Gentiles should listen to the word of him that was greater than Solomon, and be converted to the laws and economy of his spiritual kingdom; while the Jews should despise his words, and persecute his church: for which the example of the Queen of Sheba shall rise in judgment to condemn them.

4. Next to the persons of the prophets is the history of the church at large; concerning which the wisdom of God ordained, that things past should represent things to come,

and serve as admonitions and signs to the people of God to the end of the world. Hence it comes to pass, that *no scripture is of any private interpretation*: its sense does not end in the persons of whom it speaks, but is of public application for the benefit of all places and of all times. The apostle, speaking of some remarkable circumstances in the history of the church, assures us, that all those things *happened for ensamples, and are written for our admonition*. The deliverance of the Hebrews from Egypt was a pledge of our deliverance from this world of sin and bondage; the service of which is perfect slavery, like that of the Hebrews under Pharaoh. Their temptations in the wilderness were like our trials in the passage through this mortal life. Their settlement in Canaan is an earnest to us, that if we commit ourselves in faith to the guidance of God, we shall in like manner obtain the promised inheritance; and that without faith, we shall fall short of it.

Lastly, The actions of the prophets, and particularly of Christ himself, were figurative and prophetical; they are therefore called *signs* as well as miracles, because they carried an instructive signification, and pointed to something greater than themselves. The ways



of divine wisdom are comprehensive, and answer many purposes at once. Our Saviour performed many mighty works, that for the sake of them men might believe him to be the Saviour of the world ; but then they were withal of such a sort, as to admit of an application to the state of all Christians. We do not hear his voice, bidding us leave our companions in the ship and walk towards him upon the water : but all that will come to him must have their faith exercised, as that of Peter was, upon the waves of this troublesome world ; they must undertake a hazardous passage, in which nothing but the power of Christ can support them ; and if they cry to him, the same *right hand*, which saved the fearful Apostle, will be *stretched out to help them in all their dangers and necessities* ; \* and the same goodness will be tender toward their infirmity in the hour of trial ; reproofing and yet pardoning the deficiencies of their faith.

All the miracles of Christ are after this pattern ; they are signs of salvation in all ages, and admit of a general application to every member of the church, with whom the same miraculous power is still present, and acting

\* See the Collect for the second Sunday after the Epiphany.

34,    *On the Figurative Language*    LECT. 2.

for the highest purposes, though invisible to mortal sight.

To one or other of these five heads, the spiritual language of the scripture may be reduced, and from them the matter of it is borrowed :

1. From the images of nature, or visible things as representations, of things invisible.
2. From the institutions of the law, as prefiguring the things of the gospel.
3. From the persons of the prophets, as types of the great Prophet and Saviour that was to come.
4. From the history of the church of Israel as an ensample to the Christian world.
5. From the miraculous acts of Moses, Christ, and others, as signs of the saving power of God towards the souls of men.

All these things compose the figurative language of the Bible ; and that interpretation which opens and applies them to the objects of faith, is called a *spiritual* interpretation ; as being agreeable to that *testimony* of Jesus, which is the *spirit* of prophecy.

I have been thus particular in the division of my subject, that by understanding at the beginning what my design is in the whole, it may always be known, as I proceed in it, what part I am upon.

Of this figurative language, the elements first to be understood are those which are borrowed from the images of nature. And here a vast field is open to us, as wide as the world itself. If we consider it in due order, we must begin with the creation; which, as related in the book of Genesis, is a pattern of the new creation in Christ Jesus; and is so applied by the apostle: *God who commanded the light to shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.\** Till this light shines in the heart of man, he is in the same state as the unformed world was, when *darkness lay upon the face of the deep*: and when the new creation takes place, he rises in baptism, as the new earth did from the waters, by the *Spirit of God moving* upon them.

The lights of heaven in their order are all applied to give us conceptions of God's power, and shew us the glory of his kingdom. In the 84th Psalm, the *Lord* is said to be a *sun and a shield*: a *sun* to give *light* to his people, and a *shield* to *protect* them from the power of darkness. Christ, in the language of the prophet, is the *Sun of Righteousness*, who, as the natural sun revives the grass, and renews the

\* 2 Cor. iv. 6.

year, brings on *the acceptable year of the Lord*, and is the great restorer of all things in the kingdom of grace; shining with the new light of *life and immortality* to those who once *sat in darkness and in the shadow of death*. And the church has warning to receive him under this glorious character: *Arise, shine, for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee.\** When he was manifested to the eyes of men, he called himself the *light of the world*, and promised to give the same light to those that follow him. In the absence of Christ, as the personal light of the world, his place is supplied by the light of the scripture, which is still *a lamp to our feet and a light unto our paths*. The word of prophecy is as *a light shining in a dark place*; and as we study by the light of a lamp, so we must give heed to this light, if we would see things to come.

The moon is used as an emblem of the church; which receives its light from Christ, as the moon does from the sun: therefore the renovation of the moon signifies the renovation of the church; as a sign of which, the new moons were appointed to be observed as religious festivals under the law; and the apostle tells us they were *a shadow of things to*

\* Isaiah lx. 1.

come; and the substance of that shadow is known from the nature of the case, and the relation which the moon bears to the sun.

The angels or ruling ministers in the seven churches of Asia are signified in the book of Revelation by *seven stars* in the right hand of Christ: because his ministers hold forth the word of life, and their light shines before men in this mortal state, as the stars give light to the world in the night season; of which light Christians in general partake, and are therefore called *children of light*.

This natural image of the light is applied to so many great purposes, that I must not dismiss it without making some farther use of it.

You see, our God is light; our Redeemer is light; our scripture is light; our whole religion is light; the ministers of it are light; all Christian people are children of the light, and have light within them. If so, what an obligation is laid upon us, not to walk as if we were in darkness, but to walk uprightly as in the day, shewing the people of this world, that we have a better rule to direct us than they have. If we who have the light, walk as they do who are in darkness, the same darkness will assuredly come upon us; we shall understand nothing, we shall care for nothing;

the light that is within us will be changed into darkness; and then, vanity and confusion will be the consequence, as to those who walk in the dark through a perplexed and dangerous path: and better would it be not to have had the light, than to be answerable for the guilt of having extinguished it and turned it into darkness. This is the moral doctrine to be derived from the usage of light in the sacred language.

Here I would also observe, that the figures of the scripture necessarily introduce something figurative into our worship; of which I could give you several instances: but I shall confine myself to the matter now before us. The primitive Christians signified their relation to the true light, and expressed a religious regard to it, by the outward form of worshipping with their faces toward the east; because there the light first arises out of darkness, and there the day of true knowledge arose, like the sun, upon such as lay buried in ignorance. To this day our churches, especially that part which is appropriated to the most solemn act of Christian worship, is placed toward the east; our dead are buried with their faces to the east: and when we repeat the articles of our faith, we have a custom of turning

ourselves to the east. The primitive Christians called their baptism their *illumination*; to denote which, a light was put into the hands of the person after baptism, and they were admitted to hear the lectures of the catechists in the church, under the name of *the illuminated*. The festival of Christ's baptism was celebrated in the month of January with the ceremony of a number of lighted torches.—When the converts repeated the confession of their faith of baptism, they turned themselves to the east; and to the west when they renounced the powers of darkness. In the modern church of Rome this ceremony of worshipping to the east has been abused, and turned into an act of adoration to the altar; on account of which, some Christians who have heard of the abuse of this ceremony, without knowing the use of it, have rejected that, as an act of superstition, which has an edifying sense, and was practised in the days of the apostles, before any superstition had infected the church. \* As such only I would recommend it to observation.\*

\* An excellent sermon which ought never to be forgotten, and which I carried through the press, when I was an under-graduate at Oxford, was published on *Christ the Light of the World*, from a verse of the 19th Psalm, by my admired, beloved, and lamented friend, the late Rev.

In the element of air, which comes next in order to be considered, we have a figure of the Holy Spirit, which worketh imperceptibly as it listeth, while we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. The operations of the Divine Spirit are, like those of the air, necessary to life ; the one to the natural life, the other to the spiritual : and as the air gives the breath of speech, so the Holy Ghost gives the utterance of *inspiration* : therefore he descended on the day of Pentecost under the outward sign of a rushing mighty wind from heaven ; and in consequence of it, the apostles spake as the Spirit gave them utterance ; and their sound went out into all lands.

The element of water, which washes and purifies the body, is used to signify the inward cleansing of the soul from sin, by the washing of grace in baptism : and all the purifications by water under the law had the like

*George Watson*, once a fellow of University College, to whose early instructions and example I have been indebted in most of the literary labours of my life. Many extraordinary men have I seen ; but for taste in classical literature and all works of genius ; for a deep knowledge of the inspired writings ; for readiness of speech and sweetness of elocution ; for devout affection towards God, for charitable goodness of heart, and elegance of manners, I never met with one that exceeded him.



meaning ; as they are applied in those words of the prophet : *Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean, from all your filthiness, and from all your idols will I cleanse you : a new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you.\** This new heart and new spirit as the work of God's grace, was always signified by every act of religious purification ; according to that of the Psalmist, *Thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.—Make me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me.†*

Water is used in another capacity to quench the thirst ; in which sense it is put for the doctrine of God's word, refreshing and invigorating the soul, as the water of the spring gives new life and strength to the thirsty. As the spring breaks forth from the secret treasures of the earth, the doctrines of salvation proceed from a source which we cannot see. In this sort of language did our Saviour speak of the grace of his own divine doctrine to the woman of Samaria : *If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water ;‡* that is,

\* Ezekial xxxvi. 25.

† Psalm li.

‡ There is a peculiar propriety in the scripture term of *living water* for the water of a running spring ; because it

the doctrine of salvation which he preached to the world, and of which he used these remarkable words in the temple.—*He that believeth in me, as the scripture hath said, out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water*; that is, the words of his mouth shall convey that doctrine which giveth life to the world: his preaching shall satisfy a multitude of souls, as the stream of a river is sufficient to the quenching of their thirst.

As the elements of the world, so the seasons of the year have their signification in scripture. The beauties of the spring and summer are selected by the prophet Isaiah, to describe the perfection and felicity of Messiah's kingdom at the appearance of the gospel:—when righteousness should spring up among the barren Gentiles, who had been fruitless and deserted as the earth when forsaken by the sun; *The desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose; it shall blossom abundantly and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given to it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon; they shall see the glory of the Lord, and the excellency of our God.\** The season of the har-

brings with it a new life and spirit, which it has derived from the subterraneous chemistry of nature: and it is always found to contain a large quantity of air.

\* Isaiah xxxv. 1, 2.

vest, which came in at the end of the Jewish year, is applied in a parable of our Saviour to the great in-gathering of the world, when the wheat shall be reaped, the tares shall be separated for the fire, and the labourers employed in that great work shall be the ministering spirits of God, sent forth to gather his elect, and to finish his kingdom upon earth. *The Harvest of our Lord is the end of the world;* and as surely as the course of the year brings us about to that season, so surely will the dispensation of God, now on its progress, bring us to a sight of that other harvest: and it behoves us to consider well what part we are likely to bear on that occasion.

From the seasons let us turn our eyes to the animal creation; at the head of which is man, an epitome of all the other works of God.

The economy and disposition of the human body is used as a figure of that spiritual society, or corporate body, which we call the Church; and God is said to have disposed the offices of the one in conformity to the order observable in the other. The head is Christ; the eyes appointed to see for the rest of the body, are the prophets and teachers, anciently called *seers*. The hands that minister are the charitable and merciful, who delight in sup-

ers of the body. He that does not understand the language of the scripture is said to have *no ears*; he that does not see spiritual things, to have *no eyes*; he that cannot make confession of his faith with his tongue, and has no delight in the praises of God, is *dumb*. In short, every unregenerate man, who is without the knowledge of God, and has nothing but what nature and his own vanity gave him, is in the nature and condition of a beggar, *poor and blind and naked*;\* and he who is not yet alive in spirit, is even taken for dead and buried, and is called upon to *arise from the dead, and awake unto righteousness*.

The soul being invisible, its distempers are so; therefore the sacred language describes them by the distempers of the body. A nation or city, in a state of sin and impenitence, are represented to themselves as a body full of diseases and sores. In this style the Spirit speaks by the prophet Isaiah of Judah and Jerusalem; *the whole head is sick, and the whole heart faint. From the sole of the foot even to the head, from the lowest of the people up to their princes and rulers, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrifying sores.*—In the same way, the works of the devil in

\* Rev. iii. 17.

stripping and abusing the nature of man by the fatal introduction of sin, are represented as wounds given by a thief, who meets him on the road, and leaves him naked and half-dead upon the earth. This is the intention of that parable, which describes the fall and salvation of man, as the relieving and curing of a wounded traveller.

The support of man's spiritual life is like the support of his natural: and the sacrament of the Lord's Supper (which some of late have taken great pains to undervalue and misinterpret) is built upon this similitude.

Man is sent into the world to earn his bread by his labour, and some think he is sent for nothing else; but this is only a shadow of his proper errand, which is, to *work out his own salvation with fear and trembling*: and for this work he has need of sustenance, as much as for the daily labours of his life. Therefore God has provided a supply of a spiritual kind, signified outwardly by the figures of bread and wine, the commemorative sacrifice of the death of Christ, and the instituted means of conveying the benefits of it to the souls of men.—Beasts killed in sacrifice were fed upon by the offerers; and Christ's death being a sacrifice, he is fed upon in faith by those who thus

commemorate his death ; and the consequence is the *strengthening and refreshing of their souls*: if not, this absurdity should follow from the parallel, that eating the flesh of sacrifices was a mere ceremony which contributed nothing to the nourishment of the body. What can be more express than the doctrine of our Saviour himself upon this subject? *My flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed.—He that eateth me, even he shall live by me* ; that is, shall live with a new and divine life, as really as his body lives and is nourished by his daily bread. Unless these words do signify, that a real principle of life and strength is derived to us from the body of Christ, whereof we partake, there can be no certainty in language, and every doctrine of the scripture may be thrown into doubt and obscurity. Without faith, as it hath already been argued in the proper place, the language of the scripture never was nor ever will be admitted in its true sense : but with it, it is clear enough to every reader.

This first head of my subject is so copious, that I must conclude here, and defer what remains to the next Lecture.

## LECTURE III.

ON THE FIGURES OF THE SCRIPTURE WHICH ARE  
TAKEN FROM NATURE.

(A CONTINUATION OF THE FORMER.)

THE former Lecture would not allow me room to explain the figures which the scripture hath borrowed from the natural world and the objects of common life; though I determined to select such of them only as might be thought most important and instructive: and even now, the subject is so copious, that I must leave many which I should be glad to treat of.

From the consideration of the heavens, the elements, and the seasons, we descended to man, whose bodily life is a pattern and shadow of his spiritual life, and is applied to illustrate it in many instances.

From his natural, we must now go forward to his social, civil, or political life, as a citizen, subject, and member of society; together with his worldly condition, relations, offices, and occupations.

The spiritual state, or kingdom of heaven, is represented to us under the emblem of an earthly kingdom, in which God is the Supreme Governor and Judge, ruling all his creatures with infinite power, and according to the laws of justice, goodness, and mercy.

The church is a spiritual kingdom under Christ its head; and its ministers are ambassadors, commissioned to treat with the world, and propose terms of reconciliation from God, with whom they are by nature at enmity. St. Paul, having occasion to speak of his commission under Jesus Christ, saith, *For whom I am an ambassador in bonds*. This was a strange case; and he mentions it as such; because the persons of ambassadors were accounted sacred, and it was against the law of nations to do any violence to them: but the world, while it keeps good faith with itself, keeps none with God. Our blessed Saviour, as Pilate truly entitled him upon the Cross, was the *King of the Jews*, though not after the form and authority of worldly kingdoms; and as such had a claim to the allegiance of his subjects. Their rebellious treatment of him and his ambassadors is represented in the parable of the marriage of the king's son;\*

\* Matth. xxii.



whose invitation they rejected, and abused his servants. In consequence of this, his armies were sent out, to do execution upon them as murderers, and burn up their city : all of which was fulfilled upon the apostate Jews, and their city Jerusalem : and having rejected him, they are to this day without a king, without laws, without a country.

There is another parable of the same kind, which admits of a more general application, and comes home to ourselves. Christ ascending into heaven, there to receive all power, and return invested with it to the general judgment, is signified under the person of *a nobleman who went into a far country, to receive for himself a kingdom and to return.*—*But his citizens hated him, and sent a message after him, saying, We will not have this man to reign over us.\** Thus insolently and ungratefully doth a wicked world treat the authority of Christ in his absence : but he shall *return* ; and then the authority they will not admit for their good, will be turned to their destruction.—*Those mine enemies which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither and slay them before me.* Not all the powers upon earth can hinder the execution of this command ;—*bring them hither,*

\* Luke xix. 12.

wherever these offenders shall then be, they will all be found; even the grave shall not hide them, the dust shall not cover them; but the ministers of vengeance will drag them forth, and present them before that king whom they hated and affronted. Some there are, who send their message after him in terms of open treason and defiance; while others explain away the sense and authority of his kingdom with subtleties of logic and a mask of piety. But let them speak or reason, as they please, the proudest of them all are under the power of Jesus Christ: those who do not allow of his spiritual authority in his kingdom the church, are still within the reach of his justice. Happiest are they, in whose hearts the kingdom of God is established according to those words which were spoken of it,—*the kingdom of God is within you*; and who can pray daily, as they are commanded, that his *kingdom may come*; that it may prevail over our affections, and direct all our doings, till at length it shall be manifested over all, and the King himself shall appear in his glory.

The judgment passed by the magistrate in this world against crimes is founded on the law of God, and is an administration of *his* justice for the time being; an earnest of that

more equal and perfect administration which is to come. Every tribunal before which criminals are summoned is a prelude to the day of doom, when *the judgment shall sit, and the dead small and great shall stand before God, and the dead shall be judged out of those things that are written*. This may seem distant to us now, in our blind way of considering things ; but in the language of the scripture it is otherwise : *Behold*, saith St. James, *the judge standeth before the door*, ready to enter, and to bring every secret work, and every neglected and perverted cause, into judgment.

Other figures of the scripture are taken from the state in which mankind are engaged under the dangers of *war*. As men are troubled with violence and treachery from one another ; so is there another warfare more hazardous, to which all Christians are enlisted under the *Captain of their salvation*, against enemies whom no man can see ; active, subtle, vigilant, malignant spirit ; for, *we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers*. As men prepare for an earthly war, so are we to prepare ourselves that we may *stand in the evil day* : we are to put on the *whole armour of God*, as the apostle hath described it ; we are to take the *shield of faith*, the *sword of*

God's word, *the helmet of salvation*; and to pray that we may be inspired with fortitude, and assisted in the use of them. We have treachery as well as force to guard against. There are deceitful lusts which assume the mask of pleasure, while they are *warring against the soul*, as it were by sap, to undermine and destroy it.

No man can use a sword with skill, but he who hath been instructed in the art of defence, and hath practised it long: so can no man handle the word of God aright, that *sword of the spirit*, but he that has studied it diligently. With unskilful handling by the ignorant, or the ill-disposed, it may wound ourselves, and our friends, like a sword in the hands of a child or a madman.

Among the *occupations* of men, the chief is that of husbandry; and, it will afford us much instruction. As the field is the subject of man's labour, so man himself is a field under the cultivation of God: *Ye are God's husbandry*, saith the apostle. All the particulars in the course of husbandry are fulfilled in our hearts. For as the ground is broken and cleared, so is the heart to be prepared by repentance: whence the prophet Hosea thus calls upon the people; *Break up your fallow-ground*,

*for it is time to seek the Lord.* In the parable of the sower, *the seed is the word of God*, quick and powerful with the principles of life; and the different kinds of soil denote the various dispositions with which men receive the word of God; some *few into an honest and good heart*; many more into hearts open as the common high way to the lusts of the world and the visits of Satan; and as such people understand nothing spiritual, they immediately lose what they receive. Some, whose minds are shallow, cannot retain it, as not having depth enough for the word to be rooted, so as to withstand trials and temptations, signified by the scorching heat of the sun upon a stony soil. Some are so full of care and business, that the word can no more thrive, than seed among thorns and thistles.

I would propose this parable of the sower as a specimen of the excellence of that figurative mode of instruction so constantly pursued throughout the scripture. See how much doctrine, enough to fill a volume, is here comprehended in how few words; in a form striking to the imagination, and plain to every capacity!

Another sort of husbandry, not so familiar to us in this climate, is the cultivation of the

vineyard. In countries nearer to the sun, vines are cultivated in the fields, and employ many hands to plant and dress them, and gather their fruits. In the 5th chapter of Isaiah there is a mystical song, which considers the church of Israel as the vineyard of God, planted in a fruitful situation on the holy hill of Sion, cleared, fenced, and guarded, and furnished with every thing that could render it complete, and keep it in its perfection. Instead of good fruit, it produced wild grapes, as bad as if it had been left without cultivation. For this, its hedge was to be taken away, and it was to be eaten up; that is, the heathens round about it were to be let in upon it to devour it, and it was to be trodden down: no rain was to fall upon it; the blessing of divine grace from heaven was to be withheld; and thorns and briars, all sorts of wicked people, under the figure of every worthless, troublesome, and accursed plant, were to prevail in it.

In the 80th psalm, the spoiling of the church is lamented under the same image. It is described as a *vine brought out of Egypt* by the hand of God, to be rooted in Canaan; from whence the heathens were cast out to *make room for it*, as the ground is cleared of stones

and rubbish for a new plantation. But for its unfruitfulness, the boar out of the wood laid it waste, and the wild beast of the field devoured it. Such ever was and ever will be the fate of the church: when it becomes degenerate, and unworthy of the hand that planted it, the world is let in upon it; who are as eager to plunder, lay it waste, and trample it down, as the swine to root up the ground and destroy a plantation.

In the New Testament, the members of the church are considered more particularly as branches of Christ: *I am the true vine*, says he, *and my Father is the husbandman*: as the branches of the vine are dressed, so are the members of Christ under the discipline of God: correction is as necessary to them as the pruning knife to the vine; and as the branches bear no fruit but as they belong to the tree, so can no member of the church bring forth any fruit but by abiding in Christ; for *without him we can do nothing*. The unprofitable branch, that bears no fruit, is taken away from the tree, to be burned; and the fruitless Christian must expect to be cast forth in like manner, and then gathered up for the fire.

The offices of men are applied to the same

purpose as their occupations. God is pleased to take upon himself the office of a *shepherd*, and his *people* are related to him as a *flock*.—Two of the psalms are composed upon this plan; expressing the reliance of believers on the pastoral care of God, and their joy and thankfulness to him for admitting them to such an honourable relation: *The Lord is my shepherd, therefore can I lack nothing: he shall feed me in a green pasture, and lead me forth beside the waters of comfort.* Such is the language of the 23rd psalm. The 100th psalm is an invitation to a solemn act of thanksgiving, with songs and instruments of music in the temple. The people of all nations being admitted into the flock of Israel as *the sheep* of God's *pasture*, ought to assemble, within the fold of his church, for the public celebration of his truth and mercy. The obligation is particular and special upon Christians, since our Lord appeared personally to men in this character; verifying that prediction of the prophet; *he shall feed his flock like a shepherd, he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom.* To every act of care and kindness proper to a shepherd did he condescend: he took *the little children up in his arms, and blessed them*: he went about



seeking the *lost sheep of the house of Israel*; he collected together and ordered the fold of his church; he has appointed other shepherds under him to take the charge of his flock, and is with them as *the chief shepherd* to the end of the world, when he shall still appear, and act in the same character, separating the sheep from the goats in the day of judgment.

All the natural relations subsisting among mankind are applied to illustrate their spiritual interests. God is our heavenly Father, *of whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named*; the Church is the daughter of God; the spouse of Christ, and the *mother of us all*. Christ is *the first-born*, and all Christians are brethren in him; constituting together what is called the *household of faith*, as distinguished from the world of unbelievers. The Jew and Gentile are two brethren, the sons of their father; the Jew the elder, the Gentile the younger, whose apostasy and repentance are both described in the history of the prodigal son.

The union betwixt Christ and the Church is considered as a marriage, signified and fore-shewn by the first sacred union of Adam and Eve in paradise. The followers and friends of Christ are now waiting in expectation of

being called forth to meet this bridegroom, and join in the glorious procession that shall ascend, under the conduct of a train of angels, *to meet the Lord in the air*, when he shall return from the wedding: with which expectation they are to keep their *loins girded up*, and their *lights burning*. Woe be unto the foolish, whose lamps shall be gone out when the cry shall be raised at midnight, *Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him.*

As the author of our faith, Christ is our *master* or teacher; and that in so strict a sense, that we are to call no other by that name in comparison of him; much less are we to receive any other form of doctrine, from those who assume a right of teaching on the authority of any other person, or by any other rule, which the fashion of the times or the prejudices of education may have established among us.

This relation betwixt the master and the scholar must suggest to every Christian the indispensable duty of knowing the scriptures, and following the precepts of the gospel. For, let us ask ourselves: Are we the scholars of Jesus Christ, and are we ignorant of his doctrine? Do we pay no regard to his discipline, and the rules he has given for the conduct of

life? And shall we not in such a case be disowned and expelled from his society? If we know nothing of him, he will know nothing of us, and will signify the same to us upon an awful occasion.—*Depart from me, I know you not.*

Having thus far shewn how the nature, state, works, offices, and relations, of mankind are applied, and how the scripture reasons from them, as from so many parallel cases; I shall now consider what use is made of the inferior part of the animal creation. And here you are to recollect, that beasts differ from one another as men do, the sober from the sottish, the gentle from the ravenous, the trusty from the thievish, the peaceable and obedient from the blood-thirsty and rebellious: and as the scripture expresses all things by similitudes, the properties and qualities of beasts are examples of virtues and vices among men. This moral difference was the ground of the distinction of beasts under the law of Moses into clean and unclean. The people of God were to eat of no unclean creature; they were to converse with no unclean man; and so the first effect of this law was of a civil nature, to keep the Jews separate from the conversation of other nations, that they might

not learn their works. They could not eat with them, and consequently could not keep company with them; and this law has the same effect to this day with the modern Jews. The second intention of it was of a moral, or spiritual kind; to suggest a figurative lesson of purity, obedience, and patience, from the various instincts of animals.

Read the 11th chapter of *Leviticus*, and you will see how the creatures are distinguished. The gentle, tame, and profitable kinds are allowed for food; and all creatures of wild, fierce, or filthy manners, are forbidden. Thus the Israelites were reminded daily by what they ate, what manner of persons they ought to be in all holy conversation and godliness; by what was forbidden, they were taught to abhor the vices of the heathen. So saith the law itself: *Ye shall not walk in the manners of the nations which I cast out before you;—I am the Lord your God, which have separated you from other people; ye shall therefore put a difference between clean beasts and unclean, and between unclean fowls and clean;—and ye shall be holy unto me; for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people that ye should be mine.\** This passage puts the moral intention

\* Lev. xx. 23, &c.

of the distinction of meats out of dispute, and is indeed a direct affirmation of it: the people of God were to avoid *unclean meats*, as a sign that he had separated them from *unclean Gentiles* to be *holy* unto himself.

But in the fulness of time, when the Gentiles were to be admitted to Christian baptism, and taken into the church with the Jews, this act of grace in the divine economy was signified to St. Peter, by a new license to feed upon unclean beasts. The case was this:—Peter was about to be invited to preach the gospel to Cornelius, a Roman, *into whose house he could not come*; because the law which he had always observed commanded the Jews to keep themselves separate from heathens in their conversation; as, in their diet, they abstained from unclean beasts.

While this matter was depending, Peter fell into a trance, and saw a vision. A great sheet, knit at the four corners, was let down to the earth, containing all those living creatures which were forbidden food by the Levitical law, and he was commanded to kill and eat: to which, when he objected, as being contrary to the law, a voice said, *what God hath cleansed, that call not thou common*. The message from Cornelius, which immediately followed, shewed the design of this vision; that it sig-

nified the reception and cleansing of the Gentile world, and that the Jews were no longer to count them unclean. So Peter himself thus explained it when he visited Cornelius: *Ye know how that it is an unlawful thing for a man that is a Jew to keep company or come unto one of another nation; but God hath shewed me that I should not call any man common or unclean.* Therefore those living creatures of all kinds, which had been presented to him in the vision, were the people of all nations; the linen sheet which contained them signified their sanctification by the gospel; and it was knit at four corners, to shew that they were gathered together from the four quarters of the world, and brought into the church.

Nothing more need be said to prove that the distinctions among men were figuratively expressed under the law by a distinction among beasts and birds and all living creatures. In the subtlety of the fox, the fierceness of the tiger, the filthiness of the swine, the impudence of the dog, you see, as in a glass, the manners of those idolatrous nations, from whom the Jews were separated. In the gentleness of the sheep, the integrity of the labouring ox, the innocence and profitability of other tame creatures fit for food, you

see the virtues of an *Israelite indeed*, such as those people ought to be, who were gathered into the fold of the church, and had God for their shepherd. But when God had mercy upon all, and the Jew and Gentile became one fold in Christ Jesus, then this distinction was set aside. However, to all readers of the Bible, the moral or spirit of this law is as much in force as ever. Wild, subtle, fierce, unclean manners, are as hateful in Christians, as they were of old in heathens: and the heathens were taken into the church, on condition that they should put off their savage manners; as the unclean creatures had before put off their natures and became tame, when they were admitted into the ark of Noah, a figure of the church. This change was again to happen under the gospel; and the prophet foretels the conversion of the heathens under the figure of a miraculous reformation of manners in wild beasts: *The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid, and the calf and the lion and the fatling together;* and though they were once so fierce and terrible that a man dared not to come near them, they shall be so changed, that a *little child* may lead them;—*they shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain.*

Authors of natural history divide their subject into three parts; under the heads of animals, plants, and minerals—I would follow the same order, to keep my subject within a moderate compass.

Plants are applied to explain the growth of the mind, with its different qualities and productions. Thus preached John the Baptist: *The axe is laid unto the root of the trees; therefore every tree which beareth not good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.* At the transgressions of former times God had winked, and suffered men to walk in their own ways; but now the serious day of reformation was come, and men were commanded to repent, or to look for speedy execution; which accordingly came upon the unbelieving Jews, who did not take the Baptist's warning. The axe was sharp; and the hand that held it being just and irresistible, it soon laid them level with the ground.

In the first Psalm, the righteous man is described as *a tree flourishing by the water side*, and bringing forth its fruit in due season. Such is he whom the grace of God attends, and whose delight is in meditating day and night upon the law of the Lord; while the ungodly are, like unprofitable *chaff*, *driven away by the wind*. No fruitless tree will be permitted to



remain in the plantation of God, nor be *able to stand* when the storm of judgment arises.—Christians who do not persevere, but fall away into a sinful and unprofitable life, are compared to *trees whose fruit withereth, twice dead, plucked up by the roots*: dead once by nature, and dead again unto grace, after they had been revived by the reception of the gospel: of such there is no hope.

The transitory nature of man in this mortal life is shewn by the herbs of the field; and the scripture draws this picture with such beauty as far surpasses the most laboured poetical elegies on mortality.—*In the morning it is green and groweth up; in the evening it is cut down, dried up, and withered.\*—All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field:—the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God shall stand for ever.†* In their decay, the herbs of the field are patterns of man's mortality; but in the order of their growth, from seeds dead and buried, they give a natural testimony to the doctrine of the resurrection; and the apostle therefore speaks of bodies rising from the dead as of so many seeds springing from the ground. The prophet Isaiah speaks as expressly upon

\* Psalm xc.

† Isaiah xl. 6.

the same subject: *thy dead men shall live, together with my dead body shall they arise: awake and sing ye that dwell in the dust: for thy dew is as the dew of herbs, and the earth shall cast out her dead.\**

Much instruction is to be gathered from the treasures which men take (with other views) from beneath the earth: for perishable riches are figures of the *true riches*, which give in substance what the other give in shadow:—these are the riches of the mind; and though of little esteem with the generality of the world, they are yet of infinite value to those that possess them. The apostles of Jesus Christ were poor in appearance, but could boast of being able to *make many rich* in faith and knowledge. The gifts of God to the mind are represented in one of the parables as so many *talents* of money, intrusted to men by the Lord of all things, with which they are to traffic in this state of probation, and improve them to the best of their power. He who makes no improvement will lose what he has got, and then he is poor indeed.

In the prophecy of Daniel, the four monarchies of the world were signified by the chief metals which were taken from the earth,

\* Isaiah xxvi. 19.

all united in that visionary image which appeared to Nebuchadnezzar. The *head of gold* meant the *Assyrian* monarchy; the breast of *silver* was the *Persian*; the *brazen* part was the *Grecian*; and the legs and feet of *iron* and *clay* were the *Roman*. The last was inferior to all the rest in quality, but exceeded them in strength, as iron breaks all other things in pieces. The kingdom of Christ, arising in the time of the fourth monarchy, is meant by the *stone cut out of the mountain*, (that is, out of the church,) *without hands*, to smite this mighty image of worldly power upon the *feet*, and overthrow it. Accordingly, as Christianity grew stronger, the Roman empire declined, and was soon reduced nearly to the state in which we now see it.\*

We have taken a review of the natural creation, so far as the compass of these Lectures will permit, and have seen how the scripture has applied the several parts of it for the increase of our faith and the improvement of our understandings. Thus we are taught

\* The reader may see the three kingdoms of plants, animals, and minerals, considered more at large in Three Discourses preached at *Fairchild's Lecture*, by the author of this work.

how to make the best and the wisest use to which this world can be applied. The Creator himself hath made this use of it, in revealing his will by it, and referring man to it for instruction from the beginning. For this use he intended it when it was made; and without such an intention, there never could have been such an universal agreement between nature and revelation.

In this use of the world men differ from brutes, who can see it only with the eyes of the body, and can apply it to nothing but the gratification of the appetites. The ambitious and the covetous are wasting their time to gain as much as they can of it, without knowing what it is; as children covet new books for the pictures and the gilding, without having sense to improve by what is within them. To those who consider only how the creation can furnish matter to their lusts and passions, it is no better than a vain shadow: but to those who take it rightly, it is a shadow of heavenly things; a school in which God is a teacher; and all the objects of sense in heaven and earth, and under the earth, are as the letters of an universal language, in which all nations have a common interest.

There was an opinion (I should rather call

it a *tradition*) among some heathen philosophers, that the *world is a parable*, the literal or bodily part of which is manifest to all men, while the inward meaning is hidden, as the soul in the body, the moral in the fable, or the interpretation in the parable.\* They had

\* Εξέτι γὰρ καὶ τοὶ Κορμιοὶ ΜΥΘΟΝ οἰοῦν σωματικὴν καὶ χρηματικὴν ἐν αὐτῇ φαινομένην, ψυχὴν δὲ καὶ νοῦν κρυπτομένην. Sallust. Περὶ Διων. cap. 3.

Κοσμοὶ δὲ αὐτοὶ τοὶ μὲν νοῦτος οἶδεν ἡ βαρβάρος φιλοσοφία, τοὶ δὲ αἰσθητοὶ τοὶ μὲν ἀρχετυποὶ, τοὶ δὲ εἰκασία τῇ καλυμμένῃ παραδειγματός. Καὶ τοὶ μὲν αἰσθητοὶ Μοσαϊκῇ, ὡς αὖ νοῦτος τοὶ δὲ αἰσθητοὶ Εὐαγγ. Clem. Alex. Strom. Lib. 5. p. 412.

"We may call the world a fable, or parable; in which there is an outward appearance of visible things, with an inward sense which is hidden as the soul under the body.

"There is a barbarous philosophy, (*i. e.* a *foreign* philosophy,) which hath a knowledge of the *sensible* and the *intellectual* worlds; the one being the archetype or original, the other an image or copy of it. It compares the intellectual to *unity*, and the sensible to the number *six*."

This barbarous philosophy, so called by Plato, whose doctrine is here repeated by Clemens Alexandrinus, was no where to be found but in the Bible; which in its week of days, has a single day, the Sabbath, answering to the divine *rest* of the invisible world, and six days allotted to the works of this present world. Nothing but the Mosaic cosmogony, which describes the creation of the natural world in six days, and makes one heavenly day of the

heard there was such a thing; but to us the whole secret is opened, by the scripture accommodating all nature to things spiritual and intellectual; and whoever sees this plan with an unprejudiced mind, will not only be in a way to understand the Bible, but he will want no other evidence of the Christian doctrines.

Sabbath, could be the original of this philosophy mentioned by Plato.

That certain characteristics of divine truth are legible in the works and ways of nature, is no new doctrine. It hath been supposed by some, and lightly touched upon by others; but never pursued (as I have found) to any good effect. The two preceding Lectures give some little prospect of it as it stands in scattered passages of the scripture. But I am so much affected to the plan, that I have drawn out two Lectures upon it, under the title of *The Natural Evidences of the Christian Religion*, not yet published.

## LECTURE IV.

### ON THE ARTIFICIAL OR INSTITUTED FIGURES OF THE LAW OF MOSES.

NEXT in order to those figures of the scripture which may be called *natural*, as being taken from nature, we are to examine those which are borrowed from the institutions of the law, and may be called *artificial*, as being ordained and accommodated to this purpose by the Lawgiver himself.

The chief ordinances of the law are referred to in the Prophets, the Psalms, and the New Testament, and many passages are cited from thence, and treated of by Christ and his apostles, which will serve as a key to the language of the law, and shew us the intention of its ceremonies and precepts.

St. Paul, in his Epistle to the Hebrews, gives us this general idea of the law, that it had a *shadow of good things to come*;\* by which he means to teach us, that it was in its ordinances a figure of the blessings of the gospel. It was, as a shadow is, just and descriptive in its

\* Heb. x. 1.

lineaments, but it had in itself neither substance nor life. When the gospel refers us to the law, it refers us to a shadow of itself; and such references will necessarily be figurative and want an interpretation; of which I shall now proceed to give some examples.

Among the institutions of the law, the first place is due to its sacrifices and priesthood; and the first and greatest sacrifice of which we have any particular description is that of the passover. From this the apostle instructs us in the benefits of Christ's death, together with the qualifications necessary to a participation of them; and in so doing he uses the terms of the institution itself; *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us.\** This expression carries us back to the cause and end for which the passover was instituted; and it appears from this reference of the apostle, 1. That Christ is what the apostle was, a lamb taken from the flock of his people. 2. That he was a sacrifice, put to death as an offering to God. 3. That this was done *for us*, for our redemption and deliverance from the divine wrath; as the passover was sacrificed for the redemption of the Hebrews, when the first-born of Egypt were destroyed.

\* 1 Cor. v. 7.



All this is comprehended in the use the apostle has made of those terms : and this will be still plainer, if we attend to the particulars. For the character of our blessed Saviour was answerable in all respects to that of the paschal lamb : he was without blemish, innocent and perfect in his nature ; and, as the prophet describes him, like the *lamb when brought to the slaughter*,\* meek and unresisting. When John the Baptist pointed out Jesus to the Jews as the Messiah, he chose to do it in those words, *Behold the Lamb of God* ;† see and acknowledge the true passover which God himself hath provided, not for the deliverance of a single nation, but to *take away the sin of the world*. Whatever the law had ordained concerning the offering of lambs in the passover, and in the daily sacrifices of the morning and evening, all is explained in this short reference of John the Baptist, applying the sacrifices of the law to the true *lamb of God*. In the same gospel of St. John, we find another remarkable allusion to the institution of the passover. From the circumstance which happened at our Saviour's death, that *his legs were not broken* with those of the two malefactors, the evangelist observes, *these things were done*

\* Isaiah liii. 7.

† John i. 29.

*that the scripture should be fulfilled, a bone of him shall not be broken;* at which passage the margin of our best editions of the Bible refers us to Exodus xii. 46. where this direction is given concerning the passover, *neither shall ye break a bone thereof.*

If we look to the design or occasion of his sacrifice, we find it the same in effect with that of the passover: for as that was slain for the Hebrews in Egypt, so was He sacrificed *for us.* The first-born of Israel would have been destroyed with those of Egypt, but for the blood of the paschal lamb upon the doors of their houses; and we also who are, as the Hebrews were, in a land of bondage, among sinful people devoted to destruction, shall not escape the divine wrath in that night when the destroyer shall be sent out, but in virtue of the true passover: therefore we are said to *have redemption through his blood.* The term *redemption*, as applied to the salvation of sinners by Jesus Christ, is taken in a figurative sense. It signifies literally the release of a captive or guilty person, in consideration of something accepted in lieu of him. All men are in a state of forfeiture, sold under sin, and captives of Satan: out of which condition, they are *not redeemed with silver and gold*, as common cap-

tives, *but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot* ; that is, as the Hebrews were in Egypt by the blood of the passover.

The frame of mind in which we are to celebrate the Christian passover, is described to us in terms borrowed from the Jewish : this feast we are to keep with *the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth* ; free from all impure mixtures of worldly affections, pharisaical pride, hypocrisy, and false doctrine. To which those other descriptive ceremonies may be added, of having *our loins girded, our shoes on our feet, and our staves in our hands* ; in the garb and posture of *pilgrims*, soon to depart from the Egypt of this world.

Some other forms with which sacrifices were offered are of great account, and will explain to us the sense of many passages not otherwise to be understood. Christ, as our substitute, is said to have *borne* our griefs and carried our sorrows ; and the Lord is said to have *laid on him the iniquities of us all*.\* According to the form prescribed by the law, when a sacrifice was brought to the priest, it was the custom for the sinner, *or the congregation at large*,† as

\* Isaiah liii. 4, 6.

† The elders of the congregation, (see Lev. iv. 15.) or

the occasion might require, to lay their hands upon the head of the victim, and confess their sins upon it, which the innocent animal about to die was to bear for them; and the sins so transferred from the sinner to the offering were to be done away. This shews us what was meant by the prophet, when he said, *the Lord hath laid on him the iniquities of us all*; that is, he hath laid upon the head of Christ, as upon a devoted sacrifice, the sins of all mankind.

In the case of what was called the *scape-goat*,\* the animal, with this burden of sin upon his head, was turned loose into a wilderness, into *a land not inhabited*, no more to be seen of men: with allusion to which it is said in the Psalms, *As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he set our sins from us*,† no more to be remembered or heard of to our condemnation. There seems to be another reference to the same in those words of Jeremiah l. 20. “the iniquity of Israel shall be *sought for*, and there shall be none; and the sins of Judah, and they shall *not be found*.”

On one particular occasion, the congregation were commanded to lay their hands upon

the high-priest in the name of the congregation. (See Lev. xvi. 24.)

\* Lev. xxvi. 22.

† Psalm ciii. 12.

the head of the guilty person, before he was carried out to execution: which ceremony explains what is said of those for whom no atonement was to be accepted, that they should *bear their iniquity*; they should suffer for it themselves and be their own sacrifice. So again, where it is said, *his blood shall be upon his head*,\* it means, that the person in this case should be answerable for the guilt of his own death. And when the Jews blasphemously cried out, *his blood be on us, and on our children*, they meant, that whatever sin there might be in putting Jesus to death, they would venture to have the guilt of it laid upon the heads of themselves and their posterity, and atone for it in their own persons; which they have accordingly, by the just judgment of God, been doing ever since.

This laying of sin upon the head of a sacrifice, gives us a farther understanding of what happened to Christ in his passion, when the curse of our sins was crushed, with heavy and merciless hands upon his head, in the form of a crown of thorns; under which afflicting burden he was duly prepared as an offering for sin. Hence also we see the meaning of a like form which has a contrary intention; for

\* Joshua ii. 19.

as the curse of guilt was laid on the head of a sacrifice; so blessings of every kind are conveyed by the laying of hands on the heads of the persons who are appointed to receive them. Thus our Saviour took the little children into his arms, and when he blessed them he *laid his hands upon them*: thus also the sick were restored to the blessings of health; and thus the ministers of God receive their commission, with the gifts necessary to the exercise of it: *Stir up the gift of God, saith Paul to Timothy, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands.\**

When Christ is said to be a *priest*, we must understand the word in a new sense; for certainly he was not a priest in a literal sense, neither could he officiate according to the forms of the law, because he was not of that tribe to which the priesthood pertained. He is therefore called a priest *after the order of Melchizedec*, whose priesthood was prior and superior to that of the Levitical order, and carried with it the administration of *bread and wine*,† after the form of the gospel itself. Yet still we must go to the Levitical law, for the nature of the office, and the proper character of our high-priest. *Such an high-priest became us*, saith the author of the Epistle to the

\* 2 Tim. 1. 6.

† Gen. xiv. 18.

Hebrews, *who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and made higher than the heavens.\**

Such an high-priest as the law had in all respects, according to the letter; such ought we to have in the spirit; one in whom all the outward signs of holiness and perfection requisite to the high-priesthood of the law should be inwardly verified and accomplished; with no blemish of nature, no defilement of sin; sanctified by an eternal consecration, and exalted to execute that office in the heaven itself, which the high-priest performed yearly in the most holy place of the tabernacle. Even the clothing of the high-priest was not without its signification; his garments were expressive of purity, sanctity, and divinity itself: they are therefore called *holy garments*;† and there is a reference to them in the Psalms which gives them this meaning, *let thy priests be clothed with righteousness*;‡ let them be in spirit and truth what their clothing outwardly signifies. The *fine white linen* worn by the priest is here applied to its emblematical capacity to spiritual sanctification; and it is thus interpreted for us in the Revelation; *the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.*§ The

\* Heb. vii. 26.

† Exodus xxviii. 2.

‡ Psalm cxxxii. 9.

§ Rev. xix. 8.

sense of this is still preserved among us, with those who understand it right; it being the custom for a bride to go to her marriage in *white*, as a testimony of her virgin state; and they who minister in the church, either to serve, or to pray, or to sing, are clothed in white linen, to signify the purity which is proper to their calling, and should be found in their characters. The evangelists in their accounts of our Saviour's transfiguration are all of them very particular as to that one circumstance, that *his raiment was white as the light*. This divine splendor of his person was denoted by the splendor of the high-priest's garments, which are said to have been appointed *for glory and for beauty*; such beauty as is applied in the Psalms to its proper sense, *the beauty of holiness*.\* This clothing of light was proper to an earthly high-priest, only in consideration of his being a representative of that divine intercessor, who was to be *the glory* as well as the priest of his people Israel.

Such dignity hath God been pleased to grant to his ministers; not for their own sakes, but from their relation to Jesus Christ. As the Jews shewed all reverence to their high-priest, much more ought we to ours, and

\* Psalm xvi. 9.



to all that act in his name, for his sake : and they who think meanly of the priesthood, or speak of it with contempt, as some do of malice, and some of ignorance, shall one day see heaven and earth fly away from before the face of a priest.

When the name of a priest is applied to Christ in the New Testament, we understand the term in a figurative sense, and go to the law for its literal meaning ; because Christ did not serve at the altar, nor officiate in the temple, nor was of the family of the priesthood. Whereas, in truth, he was the original, and they of the law were figures of him. Had it not been for his priesthood fore-ordained of God, there never had been such a thing as a priest in the world. Why was one man appointed to intercede for another ?—Where can be the sense and reason of it ? For why cannot that man as well intercede for himself ? It was to shew that there should be in the fulness of time one to intercede effectually for all : and that this great intercessor should be *taken from among men*, like the other priests who were before him : this is the true reason why some men in preference to others were admitted to intercede ; though still on a level with the rest, and obliged to offer sacrifices *for their own sins*.

In one respect we are to this day in the state of the Jewish people. They could not offer their own sacrifices; they were to bring them to the priest, and he was to offer them. So cannot we now offer up our prayers and praises to God but by Jesus Christ; and so the apostle applies the case for us: *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips, giving thanks to his name.* Yea, and even under the law, while the earthly high-priest served, as a shadow, to present the offerings of the people to God, it was understood by the prophets that he was no more than a shadow, and that there was another divine priest to whom the office properly belonged. For who is he that saith in the 16th Psalm, *their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor make mention of their names within my lips?* David was no priest; and though he was a king, he could offer no sacrifice either for himself or for others. The passage refers to the impure and unsanctified offerings of the heathens, who went *after other gods*; yet he, who refuses to offer these, must be the person whose office it is to present to God, as the common intercessor, the offerings of all men: for the speaker here is the same as in the 10th verse, where the same priest saith,

*Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, nor suffer thy holy one to see corruption;* which words are expressly said to have been spoken of the resurrection of Christ; as the next words are of his exaltation.—*Thou wilt shew me the path of life: in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore:* for certainly this place at the right hand of Gód is the place of the Son of God, which he assumed when he ascended into heaven: this was the *joy* which the prophets and the psalms had *set before him*, for which he endured the cross and despised the shame of it. This is the priest who saith all these things: it was therefore declared to those who were under the law, that there was another high-priest, above him that ministered in the tabernacle or temple, by whose invisible ministration, the offerings of men were to be presented and made acceptable to God. So plain and direct is the doctrine of this Psalm, that St. Peter, by an application of it to the person of Christ, converted three thousand souls at once.

As the words of the apostle above-mentioned, relating to the priesthood of Christ, are spoken with reference to the figures and prophecies of the Old Testament, it must have been declared therein that we should have a

priest *higher than the heavens*: for that such an one *became us*, inasmuch as every other would have fallen short of what the scripture had testified by prophetical signs and prophetical words; some of which I am now to set before you.

Melchizedec was a sign of the priesthood of Christ; being not only *priest of the most high God*, but also a *king*, a person of royal majesty, and in dignity superior to the greatest man upon earth, because he blessed the father of the faithful; and *the less is blessed of the greater*. It follows therefore from this character of Melchizedec, that to the holiness of the priesthood there should be added in the person of Christ the majesty of a king; even of such a king as should have a throne in heaven itself. For thus is this priest spoken of in the 110th Psalm: *The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou at my right hand*: and in the subsequent verses of the Psalm the same person is spoken unto as *priest for ever after the order of Melchizedec*: therefore the scripture, under the old covenant, gives notice of a priest who should *sit at the right hand* of God; and should of consequence be *higher than the heavens*. The argument from this Psalm is very clear; but what the scripture hath said on the character

and priesthood of Melchizedec is so important, and withal so mysterious, that the apostle hath a long and critical discourse upon it in the Epistle to the Hebrews; of which he himself gives us this as the sum: *We have such an high-priest, who is set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens.*

The intercession of Christ as a priest in heaven was signified yearly in the service of the tabernacle, when the high-priest went on the great day of atonement into the inner tabernacle or holy of holies with the blood of a sacrifice. From whence the same apostle argues, that Christ as our high-priest should enter, not into the holy places made with hands, *which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.\** The holy place of the tabernacle is applied in the same manner to the residence of God in the invisible heavens, in the 24th Psalm: "Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in his *holy place?* *he that hath clean hands;*" &c. this may allude to the ceremony prescribed for the high-priest to wash himself with water† before he entered the holy place. Then follows a description of the majestic ascension and entrance

\* Heb. ix. 24.

† See Lev. xvi. 4.

of the *king of glory* into the *everlasting doors* of the heavenly places ; and this Psalm is accordingly appointed by the church as one of the proper Psalms for the feast of the ascension. A sign was given that the heavenly places were opened, for himself first and for all believers after him, in consequence of his overcoming the sharpness of death. The vail of the temple by which the holy place was separated from the worldly sanctuary, or first tabernacle, was rent miraculously at his crucifixion, and that figure of the heaven was laid open, into which none but the high-priest might enter : which circumstance is thus applied for us in the Epistle to the Hebrews : *Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way, which he hath consecrated for us through the vail, that is to say, his flesh ; and having an high-priest over the house of God ; let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water.\** These last words allude, as the correspondent ones before in the 24th Psalm, to the custom of the high-priest washing his flesh with water, before he was permitted to

\* Heb. x. 22, &c.

enter into the holy place: which ceremony is applied in the Psalm to the purity of the great high-priest himself; but in the language of the apostle with equal propriety to all Christians, who are to partake of the benefits of his ministration in heaven, and to follow a pure high-priest with purity of conscience.

Another rite pertaining to the priesthood, and of great signification in the scripture, is that of the high-priest's consecration with the anointing oil: a sign of grace and authority from the Spirit of God; and in virtue of this anointing, the high-priest had power to heal the leprosy and other unclean diseases,\* that the parties so cleansed might be fit to attend upon the service of the sanctuary, for which they were disqualified and in a state of excommunication,† so long as their uncleanness lasted. Thus in the New Testament we read, that Jesus was *anointed* of God with the Holy Ghost and with power; in consequence of which he went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the devil, for God was with him.‡ A leper, who had faith in his power, came and worshipped him, saying, *Lord, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean.*

\* Lev. xiv. 11.

† Lev. xv. 31.

‡ Acts x. 38.

When this man was cleansed of his leprosy, he was commanded to shew himself to the priest, and to make the accustomed offering, for a *testimony unto them*: and as it was the office of the priest to cure this disease, this cure was a legal proof and testimony to the priesthood of the time, that there was a greater than themselves among them; who, though not literally anointed to the ministry, had the true anointing from the Spirit of God, which had descended upon him after his baptism; and who should supersede them in their office: but it doth not appear what inference they made from the case.

As the gift of the Spirit was communicated at the anointing of the high-priest, and the Spirit is the author of love and unity to the church, who are to *preserve the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace*: we find a beautiful allusion, with an application of this rite to its mystical sense, in the 133rd Psalm; *Behold how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity: it is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down unto the beard, even unto Aaron's beard, and went down to the skirts of his garments.* It was always an undoubted truth in every state of the church, that unity is from the Spirit of God; begin-



ning in those of superior authority, and spreading itself with a progress of descent from the highest to the lowest members of the community: but the thing is most evident to us under the gospel; who are taught, that the church is the body of Christ; that he himself is the head of it: and that the Divine Spirit first shed upon him, is from thence diffused to all orders of Christians, to the least and lowest members of the church.

The scripture has numberless other references to the sacrifices and priesthood of the law, more than the plan of these Lectures will admit: for I do not undertake to explain *all* that is referred to in the law: my meaning is to shew, by several examples, in what manner the scripture itself applies the institutions of the law; and by so doing, I put a light into the hands of those who read the Bible, with which they may go farther, and examine things for themselves. Yet, among the offerings of the tabernacle and temple, there are two more for which I shall have room in this discourse; I mean the *first-fruits* and the *burning of incense*.

In 1 Cor. xv. Christ, as risen from the dead, is called the *first-fruits*; *but now*, saith St. Paul, *is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first-*

*fruits of them that slept.* From the term thus applied, he confirms, and opens, in a wonderful manner, the doctrine of the Resurrection; and therefore it is proper we should have a right understanding of it. When the harvest was ripe and ready for the sickle, a first sheaf was reaped and carried into the temple, where the priest waved it before the Lord to be accepted; and till this was done, the rest of the harvest was not sanctified to the use of the people, nor had they any right to partake of it.

The use the apostle makes of this is very extensive. In the first place, the growing of grain from the earth where it was buried, is an exact image of the resurrection of the body: for as the one is *sown*, so is the other, and neither is *quickened*, except it first die and be buried. Then the whole harvest, from its relation to the first-fruits, explains and ensures the order of our resurrection. For, is the sheaf of the first-fruits reaped? Then is the whole harvest ready. Is Christ risen from the dead? Then shall all rise in like manner. Is he accepted of God as an holy offering, and lifted up in his heavenly sanctuary? Then shall every sheaf that has grown up with him be taken from the earth and sanctified in its

proper order; *Christ the first-fruits, afterward they that are Christ's at his coming.*

If there seems any impropriety in making Christ the first-fruits, when we know that others were raised to life before him; as the Shunamite's son by Elisha, and Lazarus by Christ himself: it is to be observed, that they were *raised*; he only *rose* from the dead by his own power, as the grain springeth from the ground of itself. Besides, though they were raised, they died again; but Christ, *being raised from the dead, dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him*: He was the *first* who rose to *life eternal*. Nothing followed to mankind from the resurrection of others; but he sanctified the harvest of the whole field, and had the *efficacy* as well as the appearance of the *first-fruits*.

Saint Paul, in his apology before Agrippa, pleaded, in defence of his doctrine, that he said none other things than *those which the Prophets and Moses did say should come*; that *Christ should suffer,\* and that he should be the first that should rise from the dead*. Now these things are no where said by Moses in the letter; therefore they were foretold figuratively and in the spirit. Christ, according to the

\* Acts xxvi. 22.

doctrine of Moses, was to *suffer* in the *Pass-over*, and to *rise again* in the *first-fruits* of the harvest. And as this assertion of the apostle shews us the style and manner in which Moses preached the gospel, it is of great importance to us in our present inquiry.

The other offering, which I proposed to speak of, is that of the daily *incense*. Morning and evening it was to be offered up upon an altar of gold, where no bloody sacrifice was to come.\* This offering the Psalmist refers to in his devotions, and explains its meaning by his application of it: *Let my prayer be set forth in thy sight as the incense*. As the smoke and odour of this offering was wafted into the holy place, close by the veil of which stood the altar of incense; so do the prayers of the faithful ascend upwards and find admission into the highest heaven. *Cornelius*, said the angel, *thy prayers are come up for a memorial before God*.† The prayer of faith is acceptable to God, as the fragrance of incense is agreeable to the senses of man: and as the incense was offered twice a day, in the morning and evening, the spirit of this service is to be kept up at those times throughout all generations. The Prophet Malachi foretold

\* Exodus xxx. 8, 9.

† Acts x. 4.

that it should be observed throughout the world: *from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, my name shall be great among the Gentiles, and in every place incense shall be offered to my name.\** In the Revelation we hear of this incense as now actually carried up and presented in heaven: where the *elders fall down before the lamb with golden vials in their hands, filled with odours* (of incense) *which are the prayers of saints.†* Happy are they who fulfil this service; and at the rising and going down of the sun send up this offering to heaven, as all Christians are supposed to do, at least twice in every day. What then are they, and to whom do they belong, who do not pray? What is their incense? Perhaps it is nothing but a faithless murmuring and complaining against the Providence they ought to bless and adore. Perhaps, they call upon God, for curses upon themselves and others: and then their *mouth*, instead of offering incense, is, an *open sepulchre*, sending forth the filthy odours of death and uncleanness. From this unprofitable and most miserable state, may God deliver all Christian families, who look for any blessing upon themselves and their affairs: may his

\* Mal. i. 11.

† Rev. v. 8.

grace open their lips, and dispose their affections ; that they may meet together in peace, and make a morning and an evening sacrifice to that God whose eyes are upon them all the day long ; who made them, and redeemed them, and is alone able to save those that call upon him through Jesus Christ.

## LECTURE V.

SOME FARTHER EXAMPLES, WHICH SHEW HOW THE LANGUAGE OF THE OTHER PARTS OF THE SCRIPTURE IS BORROWED FROM THE LANGUAGE OF THE LAW OF MOSES, AND TO BE INTERPRETED THEREBY. — THE TEMPLE, THE SABBATH, CIRCUMCISION, CLEAN AND UNCLEAN ANIMALS, &c. — THE WONDERFUL TESTIMONY OF THE LAW TO THE RELIGION OF JESUS CHRIST.

NEXT in order to the offerings and the priesthood of the law, is the *place* of divine worship, wherein these services were accomplished, called *the tabernacle*; to which the scriptures both of the Old and New Testament refer us, in many figurative passages, for the right understanding of which, we must first inquire what the tabernacle was in itself.

It was a moveable habitation; like a large tent, first erected in the wilderness, when the Israelites were on their pilgrimage to Canaan. It contained two apartments; the first of which was called the *Holy Place*, appointed for the daily services of sacrifice and prayer; beyond which there was an inner apartment, called the *most Holy Place*, in which a service

was performed once in a year by the high-priest only: and these two apartments were separated by a veil reaching from the top to the bottom. In the most holy place, the presence of God was manifested, and his glory is said on some occasions to have filled the tabernacle: but it was usual for this glory to appear above or between the cherubims, which were placed here upon the mercy-seat which covered the ark; on which account the Apostle, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, calls them *the cherubims of glory*; and the Psalmist speaks of them as the proper seat of the Divine Majesty—*Thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.\**

There was this remarkable distinction between the two apartments of the tabernacle; that as the one was the place of God's residence, the habitation of his holiness: the other had a conformity with this present world; whence the apostle calls it a *worldly sanctuary*, or world-like sanctuary, that is, a sanctuary

\* If the reader wishes to inquire into the form and design of the Cherubim, more particularly than the intention of these Lectures will permit me to do, as being designed for general use, I must refer him to the last edition of Mr. *Parkhurst's* Hebrew Lexicon; the most useful work, without exception, that has ever been published on the Literature or Philology of the sacred Language.



resembling this visible world; as must indeed be evident to those who consider what relation it bore to the other sanctuary: how it was distinguished in its use from the most holy place which was the habitation of God; and how it was furnished with lights, as the visible heavens are, the chief of which are seven in number, and the lights of the tabernacle were made to answer them. From this known relation between the visible world and the sanctuary, the heavens are called the *tabernacle* of the *sun*; the whole world itself, and the firmament of heaven, with its glorious furniture, being one great tabernacle, comprehending the luminaries of the day and night, represented in figure by the lamps of the tabernacle. *Josephus*, in his *Jewish Antiquities*, has preserved a tradition, that this was the design of them, and that they had respect to the system of the heavens.\* And this alliance between the furniture of the tabernacle and the furniture of the heavens, gives us a grand idea of the visible world; the inhabitants of which are all to consider themselves as

\* The Emperor *Numa* placed a sacred fire in his temple, with the like allusion to the fire of the heavens: *fecit Vestæ virginibus colendum dedit, ut ad similitudinem coelestium siderum cœtos imperiis flamma vigilaret.* Flor. Hist. 1. c. 2.

comprehended in one great sanctuary, where the first and best employment (by necessary inference) is the service of that God who has brought them into it. Therefore the indelicate mind, which is either ignorant or insensible of this doctrine of a sacred alliance and communion betwixt God and his creature, is a poor intruder into the great temple of the world ; on whom we ought to look as we should upon the rude savage, who should come staring into a Christian church in the time of divine service, without understanding what the nature of the place is, and how the people are employed.

From this description of the tabernacle we must proceed to the figurative acceptance of it : for that it actually was a figure, and had respect to things beyond itself, is shewn by the reasoning of St. Paul throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews ; who there speaks of a *true tabernacle*, of a nature superior to that of the law, but signified and shadowed out by it. The same appears from the words spoken to Moses, *See thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount* : which direction was preserved, and is quoted in the New Testament twice, to teach us, that the visible tabernacle was nothing more than a *copy* from

an *heavenly original*, which came down from God out of heaven, (like the *New Jerusalem* in the Revelation,) and was exhibited to Moses in a vision on the mount. Hence the Apostle argues for a prophetic relation to heavenly things in the earthly tabernacle. As we hear of a *Jerusalem that is above*, corresponding to the earthly Jerusalem; so was there always understood to be a heavenly tabernacle; the eternal residence of God, as the tabernacle below was his temporary residence, while his presence was with Moses and the Jews. This heavenly original must be understood, where the Psalmist speaks of the dwelling of the righteous man in *the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty*, covering him with his wings, as the cherubim of glory are said to spread forth their wings in the secret place of the earthly sanctuary.\* So where he saith in the 15th Psalm, *Who shall dwell in thy tabernacle, or who shall rest upon thy holy hill?* No man can be so ignorant as to think that the godly were to expect their rest and reward in a tabernacle, which had no existence after the days of David. The words must refer to that other tabernacle spoken of by Isaiah, a *tabernacle that shall not be*

\* Psalm xci. 1, 4.

*taken down, not one of the stakes thereof shall be removed.\** As there is an eternal *throne of David*, on which the Messiah sits and reigns *for ever*;† so is there an eternal tabernacle, in which he is exalted as the head and ruler in his church; and both are united on another occasion.—*In mercy shall the throne be established, and he shall sit upon it in truth in the tabernacle of David, judging and seeking judgment and hasting righteousness:* which words cannot be understood of the literal tabernacle, though they refer to the *mercy-seat* in the most holy place, over which God appeared enthroned in glory above the cherubim; with which in Ezekiel's vision of them, there was a likeness of a throne, with the appearance of a man upon it; and the whole together is called *the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord*:‡ whence we collect, that what Ezekiel saw was a visionary appearance of that seat of glory in the holy place, which was the instituted likeness of the seat of the divine glory in the heavens. And in a like vision of Isaiah, the throne of God, and the display of his glory, is still present in his temple:—*I saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and*

\* Isaiah xxxiii. 20.

† Luke i. 32.

‡ Ezekiel i. 26.

*lifted up; and his train filled the temple.\** So, where the same Prophet saith, *Look down from heaven, and behold from the habitation of thy holiness and of thy glory,†* the words *habitation* and *holiness* and *glory* all refer to the earthly sanctuary as a pattern of the heavenly.

The tabernacle was also a figure of the church of Christ: and therefore the renovation and establishment of the church among the Gentiles by the preaching of the gospel, is described under the idea of a restoration of the tabernacle which had ceased from the time of David. The Prophet Amos speaks of this gathering of the Gentiles into the church of Christ, as into the tabernacle taken in this new sense; and St. James made the proper application of it, when the great question was debated concerning the reception of the heathens. *To this, says he, agree the words of the prophets, as it is written, I will return and will build again the tabernacle of David which is fallen down,—that the residue of men might seek after the Lord, and all the Gentiles upon whom my name is called.‡* To the same effect St. Stephen had observed in his apology to the Jews, that the tabernacle had originally *been brought in with Jesus into the possession of the Gentiles; and*

\* Isaiah vi. 1.

† Ib, lxiii. 15.

‡ Acts xv. 6.

therefore the church might reasonably go thither again ; whereto the preaching of the gospel under the true Jesus should remove and settle it.

The propriety with which the Christian church is signified by this name, is too plain to be enlarged upon ; inasmuch as we have already seen, that all things are there done in spirit and in truth, which were done in figure in the tabernacle of the law.

But the tabernacle, as well as the temple, is farther applied as a figure of the body of Christ ; and this in a passage not open to common observation. *The word*, saith Saint John, *was made flesh and dwelt amongst us* ; where the true sense of the original is, *he tabernacled amongst us* : and then it is added, *and we beheld his glory* ; for where the true tabernacle is, there must be also the glory of it. Here then we have the manifestation of Christ in the flesh, signified by the dwelling of God's presence in the tabernacle ; than which there can be no higher proof of his divinity to those that understand the thing in this light. As the glory of the Lord was once present in the tabernacle, it was now present in the body of Christ : and as that glory was said on that occasion to have *filled* the tabernacle, so it is said,

with reference to the same, that in him dwelt *all the fulness of the Godhead bodily*. Well therefore might he say of his body, *Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up again*; for it was both a tabernacle and temple in a stricter sense than had ever been before; the Godhead had occasionally dwelt in the buildings made with hands; but with him it abode continually. The use our Saviour made of this term amounted to an assertion of his Godhead to the Jews; but as the Jews did not then understand the sense of his expression, so are many Christians as blind to it at this day.

After the pattern of Christ, and according to their proper measure, all Christians have the presence of God abiding within them; whence their bodies also are the *temples of the Holy Ghost*: from which consideration they are instructed to dedicate them to the service of God; for that is certainly one use of a temple; and not to defile them, for that is sacrilege. And the subject gives them this consolation, that *though their earthly house of this tabernacle be dissolved*, he who raised up the tabernacle of David from its ruins to a more glorious state in the Gentile world, and raised up the temple of Christ's body which the Jews destroyed, shall in like manner quicken our

mortal bodies by the Spirit that dwelleth in us, and give us *an house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.*

It was observed above, that the *tabernacle of David* is a figurative term for the Christian church, as the mystical body of Christ: we shall likewise find, that the blessings and privileges of the Christian society, or assembly of Christian people, do all correspond with the economy of the congregation of Israel, and are described in terms borrowed from the law; of which the following example in the Epistle to the Hebrews will be sufficient, where the Apostle says,—*Ye are come unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel.*—Every Christian is to conceive what his own state is by looking back to the privileges of the church of old. He is come to Mount Zion, to a situation exalted above the world; a mountain chosen and favoured of God, blessed with the dew of heavenly grace, and inheriting the



promise of eternal life; even to that holy hill, on which Christ is established as King against all the opposition of the world below. It is the New Jerusalem, because it is ordained to be, as that city was of old, at unity with itself, and a principle of unity to all the land; where all the tribes of the earth unite in one religion, as the tribes of Israel assembled to worship at Jerusalem. The cities of the neighbouring nations were dedicated to some tutelary idol; Jerusalem alone to the true and living God; so now is the same God connected with the Christian city; and with that only; and all the company of heaven, innumerable as they are, who assisted at the delivery of the law, are with him. As the first-born of Israel, who had the right of inheritance, were redeemed and written down by name; so are all the children of the Christian society enrolled in heaven, as the first-born of God, and *the book of life* in which they are written answers to the register of the church of Israel. We are come to God the Judge of all, because we are taken out of the world of the ungodly, who are aliens, to be subject to his laws, and consequently to be under his government. It is true that all the world are under the authority of God; but then all are

not related to him as citizens and subjects. In this respect, God was said to be nigher to the Jews than to any nation upon earth, because he was with them as their judge and protector. We have our Jesus, as they had their Moses; both of them mediators, to stand between God and the people. The Hebrews were not permitted to draw near to God to treat for themselves on pain of death; but Moses was to be between them, as Christ is now betwixt us and God, and no man can come to the Father but by him: and in his blood we have remission, as all things were purified under the law, and nothing accepted or sanctified without the blood of sprinkling; which speaketh better things than that of Abel; for the blood of Abel cried for vengeance, this for mercy and pardon.

Thus is our society on like terms with theirs in every respect: and to these particulars I may add, that as the congregation of Israel, on great and solemn occasions, was called together by the sound of a trumpet, so shall the great assembly of all nations, all the tribes of the earth, and we ourselves among the rest, be summoned after the same form: *the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised:* and then we shall see with our eyes what that

great society is, in the which we now live by faith.

There are many particular institutions remaining, some of a religious, some of a moral, and others of a civil nature; a few of the most useful of which I must select, and shew how the scripture has applied them.

The Sabbath, which succeeds the labours of the week, appears to have been appointed from the beginning as a perpetual sign, a *sign for ever*,\* of that happy *rest* which the servants of God are to expect after the *labours* of this life. For thus the Apostle hath reasoned about it; that being called the *Rest of God*, it cannot be of an earthly, but must be of an heavenly nature; for God doth not rest upon earth where men labour. He shews that the true rest promised to the faithful was not the Sabbath that was appointed after God had finished his works; nor yet the state of rest, so called, in the land of Canaan; because the promise is still suspended, and repeated again in the time of David. Whence he concludes that it was a rest never yet fulfilled in this life, but still *remaining for the people of God*, and into which the faithful enter when they die in the Lord, and *rest from their labours*. I say

\* Exodus xxxi. 17.

no more of this here, because I have considered the subject more at large in my Lectures on the Epistle to the Hebrews, to which it properly belongs.

Circumcision was that rite of the law by which the Israelites were taken into God's covenant; and (in the spirit of it) was the same as baptism among Christians. For as the form of baptism expresses the putting away of sin; circumcision was another form to the same effect. The scripture speaks of a *circumcision made without hands*, of which that made with hands was no more than an outward sign, which denoted *the putting off the body of the sins of the flesh*,\* and becoming a new creature; which is the sense of our baptism. Of this inward and spiritual grace of circumcision the Apostle speaks expressly in another place: *he is not a Jew which is one outwardly, neither is that circumcision which is outward in the flesh; but he is a Jew which is one inwardly, and circumcision is that of the heart, in the spirit, and not in the letter.*† Some may suppose that this spiritual application of circumcision, as a sacrament, was invented after the preaching of the gospel, when the veil was taken from the law; but this doctrine was only enforced to those

\* Col. ii. 11.

† Rom. ii. 28.

who had it before, and had departed from the sense of their own law: for thus did Moses instruct the Jews, that there is a *foreskin of the heart* which was to be *circumcised* in a moral or a spiritual way, before they could be accepted as the servants of God; and again, that the Lord would *circumcise their heart, to love him with all their heart, and with all their soul* ;\* which was the same as to say, that he would give them what circumcision signified, making them Jews inwardly, and giving them the inward grace with the outward sign; without which, the letter of baptism avails no more now than the letter of circumcision did then: and we may say of the one as it is said of the other, "He is not a Christian which is one outwardly, and baptism is *not the putting away the filth of the flesh* by washing with water, but *the answer of a good conscience towards God*."†

Nearly allied to this was the precept which forbade them to touch any dead carcase; and, in case of any such accident, enjoined a religious purification by water. Here apply the general rule, *he is not a Jew, which is one outwardly*, and then you will understand, that outward defilement was not the thing to be

\* Deut. x. 16. and xxx. 6.      † 1 Pet. iii. 21.

feared, but the defilement of the mind, lest *evil communications* should *corrupt good manners*. This precept, in its moral acceptation, teaches that there is a certain relation between *death*, and *sin*, and *pollution*. For why do men die but for their sin? and also, that he who converses with such as are under the death of sin, that is, dead in spirit, dead to faith and holiness, will be defiled by their company, and will want washing; till which he will be unfit for the service of God. Thus the Apostle himself explains the case; that as those who were unclean by touching a dead body, were purified with a lye made of the ashes of a sacrifice, so are our consciences to be purged from *dead works* to serve the living God.\*

Another prohibition of the same nature is referred to for a like purpose, and the Apostle thereby warns the Christians to avoid the society of the Heathens; speaking in such terms as nothing but the law of Moses can truly explain: *Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers*; borrowing his expression from that law which forbade the Jews to *plough with an ox and an ass together*, that this, with a clean and an unclean beast, between whom as there is no alliance of nature, they were not

\* Compare Heb. ix. 13, 14. with Numb. xix. 11, &c.

to be mismatched under the same yoke. This the Apostle has applied to its true sense, in those words, *be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers.\** Yet this law, on a proper occasion, was to be superseded, when the Jew and Gentile were both to join in the work of the gospel: which consideration explains that difficult passage in the Prophet Isaiah,—*Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, that send forth thither the feet of the ox and the ass.*

On another occasion the same Apostle shews us, that a law which seems to make provision for beasts, was intended for the benefit of God's ministers, and is to be so applied. The law saith, *Thou shalt not muzzle the ox that treadeth out the corn.* Here, to prevent misunderstandings, the Apostle asks a question, *Doth God take care for oxen?* Was his divine and holy law made for beasts? certainly not: but, for men; *for our sakes no doubt this was written.†* Although the words were spoken of beasts, the sense relates only to men; the precept being wholly intended to teach under a figure (as the law taught every thing else) that the ministers of God's word should be maintained out of the profits and offerings of the Church in which they serve, as the ox at

\* 2 Cor. vi. 14.

† 1 Cor. ix. 9. &c.

the thrashing-floor is justly permitted to take advantage of his labour, and to partake of the corn while he is treading it out for the use of man. Every labourer, whether he be an ox or a man, is worthy of his hire; and if it is unjust and unmerciful to defraud a beast of his dues, it must be something much worse to invade the rights of the ministers of God's church. The precept therefore is stronger in its reason than if it had been delivered in plain words: yet it is to be questioned whether the reason of the thing, in any form, will prevail with all minds. Some there are in all countries, who, though they would not defraud their oxen, would be glad to muzzle every Christian minister; and that in more senses than one; they would not only be glad to see him deprived of the rights of his ministry, but be better pleased if they could put a muzzle upon the ministry itself, and stop the offence of Christian preaching. But this they will never be able to do, till God shall be provoked to forsake the ministry who have first forsaken him; and then the weakest hand that is lifted up may prevail against them.

There are two very remarkable prophecies, the one relating to the infidelity of the Jewish church, the other to the person of the Messiah,



which are the last I shall take notice of, both delivered in the figurative language of the municipal laws of the Jews.

If a woman was suspected to be an adulteress by a husband who was jealous of her, and there was no proof, she was to present herself before the priest, and stand the trial of a water-ordeal: *a bitter water which caused the curse* was to be offered to her; and when the curses were pronounced conditionally upon her supposed guilt, she was to venture the consequences, and say, Amen. The priest was to write down the form of the curses against her in a book, and to blot them out with the bitter water if she proved to be innocent; if not, they were then to remain there upon record against her. If she was actually defiled, this water was to go into her bowels, and take effect upon her body in a fearful manner, and she was to be *a curse among the people*.\*

This institution explains some very difficult passages in the 109th Psalm, that Prophecy of God's judgment against the apostate Jewish church: on whom, as upon a guilty adulteress against a jealous God, denying her sin, and defying the divine vengeance, the curse was

\* See Numb. v. 12, &c.

to take effect as against the woman in the law. The Psalm is worded as if it were meant of some single wicked person, and it is accordingly applied to the reprobation of Judas; but other passages, and the use made of them by the inspired writers, shew that it must be extended to the Jewish church at large, of which Judas, in his name, and his sin, and his punishment, was no more than a leader and an example. Here then it is said, *when he shall be judged let him be condemned*; when he is put to the trial, let him be found guilty; and *let his prayer be turned into sin*; let it be as that offering which *bringeth iniquity to remembrance*, without oil or incense to recommend it for acceptance: *let not the sin of his mother be blotted out*, but stand upon record as the curses against the sin of the adulteress, which the water was not to take away: *As he loved cursing, so let it come unto him,—let it come into his bowels like water*, even like that bitter water which descended with a curse into the bowels of the guilty woman. As she exposed herself in form to the curse, and said, Amen, to all the terms of it; so did the Jews challenge the curse of heaven, which accordingly took place on them, and their posterity.

The civil institution applied to the person

of the Messiah, is that concerning the Hebrew servant, who, having served six years, was to go free in the sabbatical year, if he chose to depart; but if he was content with his service, and willing to continue in it, he was to be brought before the judges, and to be fastened to the door, or the post of the door, by an awl driven through his ear, as a sign of his consent, and he was to serve his master for ever.\*

Under an allusion to this example, the obedience of Christ in the flesh is foretold and illustrated in the Psalms; and a wonderful example it is; for here we are to observe, that, upon this occasion, no sacrifice nor offering is appointed; nothing passes but the obedience of a willing servant: therefore in the application of it to Christ, the Prophet says, *Sacrifice and offering thou didst not desire, but mine ears hast thou opened;—burnt-offering and sin-offering thou hast not required; then said I, lo I come, in the volume of the book it is written of me, I delight to do thy will, O God.* In the Epistle to the Hebrews, the passage, as cited by the Apostle, and applied to the obedience and death of Christ, stands thus; *Sacrifice and offering thou wouldst not, but a body hast thou*

\* Exod. xxi. 6.

*prepared me.* The sense is the same in both, though the words are different. The Apostle after the Greek version says, *a body hast thou prepared me*; that is, a body wherein to suffer and be obedient unto death: the Psalm says, *mine ears hast thou pierced*: for the word is the same as in the 22d Psalm, *they pierced my hands and feet*; and here the piercing of the ear, the symbol of obedience, was a sign of his suffering in that body which should be prepared for him. All this being a reference to the custom observed under the law toward the obedient servant, that custom was a standing testimony in the volume of the book of Moses, that the Messiah, taking the form of a servant, should offer himself freely to do the will of God for our salvation; and in consequence of this determination, should be pierced in the body, as the willing servant was bored through to the post of the door: the place where the blood of the passover was sprinkled with the same signification once every year.

In this and the preceding Lecture, I have endeavoured to shew, as my plan requires, how the language of the other parts of scripture is borrowed from the language of the law, and is to be interpreted thereby. To what has

been said, give me leave to add a few general observations on the nature and design of the law of Moses.

St. Paul asks the question, *Wherefore then serveth the law?* To which he gives this answer; *It was added because of transgression, till the seed should come to whom the promise was made.\** The expectation of the seed first promised in paradise, and afterwards to Abraham, was the sum and substance of the patriarchal faith; and all the earliest institutions of priesthood and sacrifice were intended to keep up this expectation. But when the perverseness of men had changed and corrupted the primitive institutions for the base purposes of idolatry and the worship of false gods, it became necessary, on account of these frequent transgressions, to add a written law, with a stated form of positive services, never to be altered nor departed from; and all of them descriptive of the salvation which was to be effected by the promised seed; whence you are not to wonder, that in him they all meet, and find their interpretation.

They who were bound to the observation of the law, were thereby separated of necessity from the world; and, as St. Paul very

\* Galatians iii. 19.

strongly expresses it, *shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed* ;\* confined to a set of ceremonies and services, under which it was in a manner impracticable for them to evade the objects of their faith, when they should be revealed in their true form. Not only the substance of what was expected, but all the particulars and circumstantialia had been acted over in figure for ages together : and so the law was *a schoolmaster unto Christ* ; preparing those who were under it for the reception of the gospel, and as it were forcing them upon it, if men could on that principle be reconciled to truth.

When the gospel appeared, the Jew should have reasoned thus with himself. Do they say Jesus died for our redemption? So did the paschal lamb die to redeem our whole nation in Egypt. Did he ascend afterwards into heaven? So did our high-priest go yearly into the most holy place, carrying thither the blood of a sacrifice slain in the worldly sanctuary. Is there no remission of sin without shedding of blood? There certainly was none under the law. Has Jesus appointed a baptism with water? So had our law its purifications for the washing away of uncleanness.

\* Galatians v. 23.

Is the partition we have so diligently kept up between ourselves and the Heathen to be broken down at last, and is the true religion to be carried out among all nations? So was our tabernacle brought from the solitary wilderness under Joshua, whom the Greeks call *Jesus*, into the *possession of the Gentiles*. Numberless other questions might be asked, shocking to the prejudices of a Jew, which would bring their own answers with them out of the law of Moses: and such was the use the Jew ought to have made of it.

From the various application of particular passages from the law, previous to the revelation of the gospel, it appears that the law was in itself a spiritual as well as a figurative system, for the forming of the heart, and the purifying of the mind; yet conveying its precepts in parables and signs which wanted an interpretation: and that interpretation is occasionally dropped in so many parts of the scripture, especially in the Psalms, that the prophets and masters of Israel appear to have understood the law in a spiritual sense. If the bulk of the people did not understand it so, we must not impute this to any uncertainty or obscurity in Moses and the prophets, but to that carnal affection which

naturally chuses the form of religion without the spirit of it. Their pride, their affectation of false wisdom, their avarice, their adultery, blinded them, and made them as averse to the sense of a miracle wrought before their eyes, as to the sense of the darkest verse in the Pentateuch. The world, always has been, and now is, to those that are shut up under its laws, a schoolmaster to turn men away from Christ; and a conceited worldly-minded Christian, proud of the powers of reason without grace, is at this hour as blind to the spirit of the gospel as the Jew ever was to that of the law. For ignorance of the true *spirit* of Christianity, and the *design* of its doctrines, I would match the modern philosophising Socinian with the blindest Jew: for the one has made the gospel as void as the other made the law. Read the writings of some whose books have made a great noise in the present century, and you will know no more of the Christian church and the Christian sacraments, than the wandering Jew, who now travels about to cheat Christians with his wares, knows of the priesthood and sacrifices in the books of Moses.

The law is of use to us Christians for the illustration of the New Testament, whose lan-



guage and mysteries are so founded upon it, that the language of the Gospels and Epistles is unintelligible without a particular attention to the law ; and in proportion as our knowledge of it increases, our faith will grow stronger. Thus the law serves for evidence both to the Jew and Gentile ; and the same schoolmaster, which should have brought them to Christ, will keep us with him. For, did the Apostle in his preaching *say nothing but what Moses had said* ? And did the gospel teach nothing but what the law had *signified* long before ? Then must the gospel be that very salvation, which was known to God from the beginning, and in reserve to be made manifest to the world in the latter days.

This argument, clear and irresistible as it certainly is, will one day appear to the Jews as it does to us ; when the scales of blindness shall fall from their eyes : and then it may be thought the greatest wonder of all, that they who had the Old Testament in their hands for eighteen hundred years, should never have seen the use of it before.

## LECTURE VI.

ON THE FIGURES OF THE SCRIPTURES WHICH ARE BORROWED FROM THE EVENTS OF THE SACRED HISTORY.

THE Scripture is the authentic history of God's Providence ever since man had a being ; and in the conduct of God's Providence toward man, there is an uniformity of design, which hath proceeded according to the same laws of eternal justice and wisdom in all ages of the world : from which consideration it follows, that what God did in times past was an earnest, a pattern, and a sign, of what he might be expected to do in times to come. The godly were delivered, the wicked punished, the proud abased, the humble exalted, under like circumstances, and after like forms, at different periods of time. Thus it hath been, and thus it will be : therefore things past are referred to in the scripture as figures of things to come, and so the history of the Bible becomes a chain of prophecy, and is actually applied as such by the scripture itself ; as we shall see from a variety of examples.

I reckon two sorts of historical figures, the one general, the other particular; the former being references to the history of places, and of such events as related to a people at large, or even to the whole world; the latter referring us to the lives, actions, sufferings, and successes of individual persons. Thus the saints of old were prophetic in their actions as well as in their words: of which some striking examples will occur to us as we proceed.

One of the most early and memorable events of the Scripture is that of the destruction of the world by the Flood; from which Noah and his family were saved in an Ark, supported by those same waters which destroyed the world of the ungodly. This history of the Salvation of Noah is applied by St. Peter as a *figure* of that *Salvation* which we now obtain as the *family* of Jesus Christ in the Ark of the *Church* by the *waters* of *Baptism*: *the long-suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water. The like figure whereunto, even Baptism, doth now save us by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ.\** By which it is to be understood, that the salvation of Christians by Jesus Christ, and the salvation

\* 1 Peter iii. 20, 21.

of Noah's family, are two events of the like form and figure; the former a sign of the latter. And a wonderful sign it was, if we look into the particulars. Here was a judgment which extended to a whole world; a condemnation that passed upon all, except those who were of the family of Noah: as the wrath of God, and a future judgment upon sin, to be executed by fire, is denounced against all mankind, except those who shall belong to the family of Jesus Christ. As an Ark was prepared by Noah, so hath Christ prepared his Church, to conduct us in safety through the waves of trouble and the perils of the world, in which so many are lost. And as the waters of the flood carried Noah and his family into a new world after the old was drowned; so do the waters of Baptism carry us into a new state with Jesus Christ, who passed over the waves of death, and is risen from the dead. And this practical inference is to be made in favour of the ordinance of the church; that as the ark could not be saved but by water, so must all the Church of Christ be baptized. So plainly doth this whole figure speak the doctrine of the Christian Salvation, that it is applied for instruction in the office of Baptism, where we are taught to pray, that the child

*may be received into the Ark of Christ's Church, and therein pass through the waves of this troublesome world.* Many other particulars belonging to this figure will explain themselves when the general sense of the figure is understood; and therefore I need pursue it no further.

The confusion of tongues, with the dispersion of the nations, is another great event, which comes next in order of time, and ought not to be unnoticed, because it was reversed when all the nations, so divided at Babel, were *gathered together in one* in Christ Jesus, to be a *holy nation, a peculiar people*: and the different languages which arose at Babel were all united in the tongues of the first preachers of the Gospel on the day of Pentecost. God being the fountain of truth and author of peace, his religion makes itself intelligible to all; but where there is disobedience of mind and wickedness of principle, there do confusion and division ensue, as in the first religious rebellion at Babel. Against such people, this judgment is denounced by the Psalmist; *Destroy, O Lord, and divide their tongues, for I have seen violence and strife in the city.\** The city of God is at unity with itself; but the city of the adversary, like *Babel*, the *Mother of Harlots*, is the

\* Psalm ly. 9.

Citadel of dispute and division. The false wisdom of this world begins and ends (if error has any end) with disputation and opposition. We see an example of this in the multitude of gods, and the many strange rites of worship, with the endless *oppositions of science, falsely so called*, which arose among the Sects of the Heathen Philosophers when the Greek and Roman learning flourished : and (to come nearer our own times) in the multitude of sectaries and heresies which have arisen since the Reformation, in this country, among those who paid no regard to the doctrines and discipline of the primitive Church. In a word, all those who set up themselves, and affect high things, in opposition to the wisdom of God, are cursed with confusion ; and there is no greater evidence of their error, than that they are never able to speak the same language.

After the events of the Flood, and the dispersion at Babel, the destruction of Sodom is to be understood as a sign, or prophetic figure, of the future destruction of the world by fire, together with the deliverance of the faithful after the example of Lot. This history is referred to in the 11th Psalm, where the wicked are threatened with *fire and brimstone* to be

rained upon them *from the Lord*, as formerly upon Sodom. St. Jude, in his Epistle, warns us that *Sodom and Gomorrah* are *set forth for an example,\* suffering the vengeance of eternal fire*. And that short admonition of our Saviour in one of His discourses, *Remember Lot's Wife*, teaches us what we ought to learn from the particulars of the story; that as the world shall be destroyed by fire like Sodom, so a remnant shall be saved by the divine mercy; and that of those who are taken by the hand to follow their deliverer, and to *flee from the wrath to come* (which is another allusion to the same event) some shall turn back in their hearts and affections toward this wicked world, and so be *unfit for the kingdom of God*: a circumstance which should be thought upon with fear and trembling: for consider how that *unbelieving Soul*, by favouring what was evil, lost all that was good, when it was in her power to escape; as they will not fail to do, who either disbelieve God's judgment upon the world, or think the world undeserving of it, and so take part with the wicked against the justice of God. When times and places are evil, and wickedness prevails with a high hand, the universality and power of corruption is

\* Jude, verse 7.

dreadful to think of. When the world was drowned, *few*, that is, *eight souls* only were saved in the ark; and when Sodom was overthrown, a small remnant only were delivered; whence we are to expect, that *as it was in the days of Lot, so shall it be in the day when the son of man is revealed*: confidence in this world, and an insolent disregard of truth and godliness shall generally prevail, and few indeed shall be left to receive him, and escape with him, when this Sodom wherein we now live shall be visited.

From a likeness of character in the Jewish people, when they became abominable in their sins, the name of *Sodom* is given even to their city, and they are threatened with the same fate. *Hear the word of the Lord, ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah*; saith the prophet Isaiah.\* The Prophet's message is to Judah and Jerusalem; the rulers and people of which being fallen into great corruption, and strengthening themselves in their wickedness, are addressed by the Prophet as the rulers and people of the abominable Sodom; and he pronounces that they would have met with the judgment of Sodom, but for the sake of the faithful who were still

\* Chap. i. 10.



left among them, such as Abraham hoped to find when he interceded for Sodom: *Except the Lord of Hosts had left unto us a very small remnant, we should have been as Sodom, and we should have been like unto Gomorrah,\** that is, as like unto them in their punishment as they were in their manners. And now we shall see the reason why the Evangelist, in the book of Revelation, speaks of a *great city*, which *spiritually is called Egypt and Sodom, where our Lord was crucified*; for certainly our Lord was crucified at Jerusalem, and Jerusalem, for its apostacy and the judgment that was to overtake it, is called by these names in the prophets: though the passage as it stands in the Revelation may be extended from the example of Jerusalem to the world at large.

I pass over the allegorical history of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, the bond-woman and the free, because it hath been so fully commented upon by the Apostle as a figure of the Jewish and Christian covenants, I cannot add to his explanation; and as I should be unwilling to contract it, I rather chuse to refer you to the consideration of it, as it stands in the fourth chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians; and shall proceed to the deliverance of

\* Isaiah i. 9.

Israel out of Egypt, which is one of the most interesting and edifying histories of scripture; as it gives us an example of all the dangers, temptations, and deliverances, that can happen in the life of man, during his progress and pilgrimage through the wilderness of this present world. For, in the first place, the translation of the church from Egypt to Canaan is applied in all its circumstances as a pattern of the translation of us Christians from the bondage of sin, to the enjoyment of our freedom in the kingdom of Christ. *Out of Egypt*, saith God by the Prophet, *have I called my Son*.\* a declaration which is as truly verified in every child of God at this day, as when Israel was delivered from Pharaoh, and when the infant Jesus was brought back in safety from Egypt to his own kingdom and people.

Thus the redemption of the people of God from Egypt was a sign of a greater and more universal redemption, is a doctrine with which few readers of the scripture can be unacquainted. The prophets warned the people not to rest in the redemption that was past, but to look for another, and that so much more excellent in its nature, that the former should in a manner be forgotten in comparison of it:

\* Hosea xi. 1.

*Remember not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing, saith the Lord, I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.\** He promised also in one of the Psalms, that he would bring his own people *again from the depths of the sea*; which can signify nothing but that universal redemption from sin and death in which all the nations of the world have an equal interest: because this Psalm is not addressed to the Jews, but to all the *kingdoms of the earth*; and is applied by the Apostle to the victory of Jesus Christ over death, and to the miraculous gifts bestowed on the first preachers of the gospel:† so that there can be no doubt as to the intention of the expression in question: it must have the same signification in figure as is expressed in the letter at verse 20. —*to the Lord our God belong the issues from death.*

But the figurative application of the history of the Exodus is much plainer in the New Testament. There we see Zacharias, in his prophetical hymn on occasion of the birth of John Baptist, celebrating the blessings of the Christian redemption in terms borrowed from

\* Isaiah xliii. 18.

† Compare Psalm lxviii. 18. and Ephesians iv. 8.

the past redemption of Israel out, of Egypt.\* God is said to have *visited* and *redeemed* his people by raising up a Saviour in the house of David,—to have performed the *mercy promised to the fathers*, which in the letter of it related to the deliverance from Egypt ;—to have *saved us out of the hands of our enemies, that we might serve him without fear*, as the Hebrews did, when they were no longer under the power of Pharaoh,—and finally, to *guide our feet into the way of peace*, as he had before guided his people to a peaceable settlement in the land of Canaan.

If we consider the history of the Exodus more particularly as an example of the circumstances of our redemption by Jesus Christ ; the first thing that offers itself is the miserable servitude of the Hebrews under Pharaoh. Such is the natural state of every man who is born a sojourner in the Egypt of this world. As they laboured in clay and mortar, so is every man by nature the slave of vile and earthly affections. As the Hebrews were under Pharaoh, man is under Satan, the proud enemy of the true God, and the irreconcilable and merciless persecutor of his church. From this miserable state, Christ, as the mes-

\* See the Hymn called *Benedictus*.

senger and minister of God, is sent from heaven to deliver man, as Moses was raised up for a like purpose, and sent to lead the people out of Egypt; of whose office we shall have a farther prospect when we come to the second sort of historical figures. Look at the order of the redemption from Egypt, and you will find it agree in every particular with the order of the Christian salvation. The people were conducted to the waters of the Red Sea, where the Apostle instructs us *they were all baptized unto Moses* :\* they were all *saved by water*, as the family of Noah had before been saved at the flood, and as we are saved now. It doth not appear to us how they could have been saved from Pharaoh, but by the interposition of the waters of the sea. Here their salvation began, and the power of their adversary ended : and we know that Satan has not that sovereignty over baptized Christians as he has over men in the state of nature.— After baptism a Christian is no longer the subject of the Tyrant, but the child of God, who undertakes thenceforth to conduct him through all the trials and dangers of this life to the inheritance promised to the fathers.

We see how man is to be supported in this

\* 1 Cor. x. 2.

life, and to what dangers he is exposed in the way of his salvation, if we observe what happened to the Hebrews in their way through the wilderness. *No temptation befalls us but such as is common to man*, and of which their case gives us an example. The things which befall them are not only apposite and applicable to our own case, but St. Paul affirms they were purposely ordained by the providence of God to answer this very end: *Now all these things happened to them for ensamples; (or, as the margin calls them, types;) and they are written for our admonition.\** And here we are to note, as the Apostle himself does next after their baptism, how they were fed and supported. They might have been carried a short way through a fruitful country to the land of Canaan; but it pleased God to lead them into a wilderness, where there was neither meat nor drink: which made some of them suspect he had carried them there to destroy them: but his design was to teach them the necessity of prayer and faith and dependence upon himself; and blessed are they to whom the Lord now teaches the same lesson under the want of many things. But, in the spirit, this is the case of every man; for

\* 1 Cor. x. 11.

we are all brought, after our baptism, into a barren world, where we find no more to support that life which God promised to his people, than the Hebrews found in the wilderness. Here we *wander* (as the Psalmist figuratively describes the state of man) *hungry and thirsty, our souls fainting within us*, and depending upon God for his daily grace. The people were taught this in the wilderness by receiving their meat from day to day in a miraculous manner from heaven. It was mere *manna*, such as Moses gave, to those who looked no farther than their bodies; and they were consequently soon tired of it; but to those who received it in faith, it was the *bread of God which cometh down from heaven, and giveth life unto the world*. God in all ages has been the giver of that support which is necessary to all men, whether followers of Moses, or followers of Christ: and Hebrews, if they had souls to be saved, could no more live by *bread alone*, than Christians can. God therefore was pleased to take this way of teaching them that they could not: and the Apostle, seeing his intention, says, *They did eat all the same spiritual meat; and did all drink the same spiritual drink; for they drank of that spiritual*

\* See John vi. 32.

*rock that followed them, and that rock was Christ.\** There is not a more extraordinary sentence in the scripture than this before us,—*that rock was Christ.* It is impossible to take the words literally, any more than those which Christ spake of the bread which he brake, and said, *This is my body.* A rock of stone in a desert could not be Christ in the literal sense ; and yet it must be so in some sense, because the Apostle hath affirmed it. This sense is therefore figurative and spiritual ; as the bread, which is broken in the holy communion, is bread to the body, but Christ to the spirit. And as Christ was the invisible fountain of grace to the thirsting Israelites, communicating himself to them by the sacramental waters of a rock, so he still offers himself to us in the same capacity,—*If any man thirst, let him come unto me and drink :†* that is, if any man, sensible of the drought and emptiness of his own nature, thirst after spiritual things, he shall be refreshed with grace, as the thirsty body is refreshed by the waters of a living spring. He discoursed to the same effect with the woman of Samaria by the side of a well to which she came to draw water,—*Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst.*

\* 1 Cor. x. 3, 4.

† John vii. 37.



But now, as this meat and drink in the wilderness were figures of Christ, so the people in their use of them are ensamples to us. God shewed them, that man is in want of some nourishment, which nature and the common course of things cannot give him: therefore he fed them with manna *from heaven* and water from a *dry rock*. But many of them took no delight in this spiritual diet. Though they had seen the wonders of the Red Sea, yet they carried Egypt with them in their hearts into the wilderness, and were sorry that they had left it. He who reads of their *loathing that light bread*, and desiring to return to the bondage of Egypt for the gratification of their lusts, may wonder at their stupidity; who could see manna sent down from the heavens, and the stream of a river running miraculously through a dry desert, and not partake of them with thankfulness and devotion! But he will find when he looks around him, that men are just such now as they were in the wilderness; carnal, inattentive, and worldly-minded. Christians, called to a state of salvation, give the preference to that world which they renounced at their baptism, and bring it with them into the Christian profession, as the Hebrews brought Egypt with them into the wilderness.

Whatever you think of the manna from heaven, and a springing well from a stone of flint, you have a greater miracle before your eyes daily. You have Christ come down to be the life of the world, and offering himself as the true manna in the blessed sacrament. You have his Spirit and his word, as a water of life attending you in your way through this wilderness : but these spiritual blessings have their value with those only who are *spiritually minded*. Count the congregation of Christians in any parish, and see how few of that number attend the holy communion : then you will discover, that Christians are sick of this Jewish distemper. As the wonders of the wilderness made no impression on those who were still affected to Egypt; so Christianity can offer nothing desirable to those whose hearts are full of the world. Where there is an attachment to fulness of feasting, excess of drinking, and to the other prospects, pleasures, and profits, of the world, there can be no spiritual appetite. To thirst after earthly and heavenly things at the same time, is as impossible as to serve God and Mammon. Can the man, who makes it his wish and his pleasure to be drunk, join with the Prophet and say,—*Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so*

*longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, even the living God: when shall I come and appear before the presence of God? Doth he not rather say, "Let me never come near him, for I have no relish for his ways or his worship. I wish there were no church, no sacraments, no preaching, no praying. I was baptized to be a member of Christ, but I never desire to be in his company. Let me continue to be one of the swine of Egypt, as I have hitherto been, and let my latter end be like theirs."* Such is the language which passes in many hearts when it is put into plain English. Men are called by different names at distant periods of time; but the workings of their minds are the same in all ages. The devout Christian follows the calling of God at this day, on the same motives of faith as the Patriarchs did of old, and considers this life as a pilgrimage; while others are drawn away by the world and the flesh just as they were whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. They were made examples to us, with this intention as the Apostle instructs us, *that we should not lust after evil things as they also lusted.\** If we look to their history in the book of Numbers, we find how discontented and miserable

\* 1 Cor. x. 6.

they were under the way of life to which God had brought them : *The children of Israel wept again and said, who shall give us flesh to eat ? It was well with us in Egypt, but now our soul is dried away ; there is nothing at all besides this manna before our eyes.* Then we read that God complied with their murmurings, and sent them meat to the full ; but sent a plague after it, whereby many were destroyed ; and the place received its name from the *graves* of those who were buried for their *lusts*.

Here the child of this world may see his own picture. It is his object to gratify himself at any rate, without considering the consequences. His Paradise is this Egypt : self-denial is a meagre doctrine, and there is nothing to be got, which he can relish, by the service of God. You will therefore see people as fretful and cross when devotion and self-denial come in their way, as the weeping Israelites, who complained that they were dried up with eating manna. And the consequence is as it was of old, *God is not well pleased* with them : and, sooner or later, every man will feel the effect of setting God against him by his indifference and disaffection. Some have their punishment in that fulness which they have desired. Who among us cannot recollect many,

who have died before their time, by following some ungoverned appetite ; and come to the same end, by the same means, as they who were buried at *Kibroth Hataavah* ? If they live long to enjoy that for which they thought it worth their while to murmur against and despise the ways of God, they suffer miserably in another respect : as it is said in the Psalm, *He gave them their desire, and sent leanness withal into their soul :\** so that while their bodies were thriving, their souls were starving. If it were possible to see the souls of some such people, they would look worse than skin and bone ; wasting and perishing for lack of that grace by which the inner man is renewed. He then who wishes to find death, misery, and the displeasure of God, which is worst of all, let him turn back from his Christian profession, and demand satisfaction for all his lusts. But let him who wishes to find Canaan at last, be content to find a wilderness in the way to it, and there take with thankfulness what God has appointed for him.

\* Psalm cvi. 15.

## LECTURE VII.

## HISTORICAL FIGURES OF THE SCRIPTURES CONTINUED.

IN the preceding Lecture, we have seen how the dangers of the Christian warfare are set before us, in the history of the Militant State of the Jewish Church in its translation from Egypt to Canaan. *St. Paul* hath expressly taught us, to consider that history as prophetic of our own situation as Christians; and hath showed how it is to be applied as an admonition or warning to us, that we may not *fall after the same example of unbelief*. We have seen how the people who had been baptized under Moses, and had passed through the Red Sea, afterwards preferred the slavery of Egypt to the service of God in the wilderness; becoming weary of his ways, and despising the better for love of the worse.

But we followed them only on a part of their journey. Other circumstances are yet behind, from which the like instruction is to be gathered: and in treating of them, I shall observe the same order as the Apostle hath done in the 10th chapter of his first Epistle to the

Corinthians, where he warns us not to be *idolaters, as were some of them; as it is written, the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose up to play*. This refers us to the occasion of their making a golden calf, and worshipping it with the riotous mirth of idolaters; which showed that they had forsaken the true object of their worship, and had forgotten the design of their redemption from the bondage of Egypt. While Moses was in conference with God upon the mount, their folly had taken up an opinion, that he would not return to them; and consequently, that they might fall into licentiousness, without the fear of being called to an account: so they danced before a golden calf, and gave themselves up to eating, and drinking, and playing, as if they had totally forgotten the design of their journey through the wilderness. Are these the people whom God, with so mighty a hand, had lately rescued from the tyranny of Pharaoh? Are these the people who had seen the waters of the sea divided, to save them and destroy their enemies? who had followed a cloud, which led them by day, and gave light to them by night? and had they so soon forgotten all these wonders, and fallen into the senseless mirth of idolatry? Strange

it is! but such was the fact. And now let us observe the consequence. Moses, whom they had forgotten, descends from the mount when they little expected him; he surprises them in the midst of their sin, and sends the Levites, armed, as his ministers, to execute vengeance; who smote with the sword from one side of the camp to the other, and there fell some thousands of the people. Our Saviour, in one of his discourses, hath applied this history as an admonition to those careless sinners, who live in pleasure, and are unmindful of Him who will shortly return to be their Judge: *But if that evil servant shall say in his heart, my Lord delayeth his coming, and shall begin to smite his fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken; the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for him, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in sunder, and appoint him his portion with the unbelievers.\** This brings the history home to ourselves. As Moses for a time left the people in the wilderness, so hath our Leader left us, and he is now up with God in the holy mount. In this interval, there are Christians (so called) who *wot not what is become of him*, and make a profane

\* Luke xii. 44.



use of his absence; setting up this world, in some form or other, as their idol, and devoting themselves to the worship of it. Whatever the object may be, which any man has substituted in the place of God, that object is to him what the calf was to the Hebrews. How many are there who spend their lives in the dance of pleasure, as if they had been sent hither for no other purpose! others devote themselves to honours and preferments; and, to accomplish their designs, affect popularity, and worship *the beasts of the people*. Wealth is the object of others; and theirs is a calf of gold. The covetous serve mammon the God of riches; and the sin of *covetousness* is expressly called by the name of *Idolatry*.\* Are these the people of God? Are these they, who were baptized into the name of Jesus Christ as *dead unto sin and alive unto righteousness*? Are these the children of Abraham; followers of them who through faith and patience obtained the promises? Merciful God, what a transformation is this! Are they not rather of those unprofitable servants, whom the Lord

\* The learned Mr. *Parkhurst*, in his Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, gives very good reasons why we ought rather here to understand the sin of *unlawful lusts*, as in that other expression, *whose God is their belly*. See under the word *πλινξια*.

at his return from the mount shall surprise and judge as hypocrites and unbelievers?

We have another example of our danger from the case of the Israelites, who fell into sin from evil communications and bad company. There was a *mixt multitude* of strolling Egyptians and disorderly people who went up with the Hebrews out of Egypt, and attended their camp from motives of curiosity or beggary. These are said to have *fallen a lusting*, and to have propagated their evil inclinations among the congregation; who, led by their example, provoked God with their discontent and murmurings. The Christian church hath always been attended by a like unprincipled multitude of heretics, sensualists, enthusiasts, sectaries, and even atheists; men, who, being discontented with the ways and doctrines of the Christian society, have recommended and spread their own evil opinions, and occasioned multitudes to fall away. A defection from the doctrines of Christianity is the natural consequence of a departure from the worship, and sacraments, and authority of the Church. Some of the earliest instances of blasphemy against the doctrine of the blessed Trinity, were found among ignorant people in those times of confusion and rebellion,

when a mixt multitude of more than sixty different sects arose even to the astonishment of those who first began the separation.\* But afterwards the same error was adopted by men of higher pretensions to learning, who have found too many followers; till the times have at length produced a new generation of opinionists, who assume to themselves, and attribute to one another, the honours of confession and martyrdom, for asserting the blasphemy of Socinius against the church and the kingdom of Christ, with the same boldness as the saints, in the primitive times, asserted the doctrines of the gospel against the heathen powers and the kingdom of Satan. But boldness without truth will never make a Christian confessor: and if a man injures himself for the love of error, he is not a martyr, but a suicide.

They who are acquainted with the world, and the present state of religion and literature, must have observed, that heresy, schism, and the new philosophy of the Deists, with their

\* An authentic and very curious account of the errors and blasphemies of that time, (two years before the death of the king,) was published in a Treatise, entitled *Gangræna*, by *Thomas Edwards*, Presbyterian minister: of which, see part 1. page 32, 110. But see also *Burnett's History of the Reformation*, An. 1549. vol. 2. page 111, 112.

numerous adherents, form a mixed multitude, which are always hovering about the Christian camp, and never fail to corrupt it. They are now boasting of their success, and threaten to overwhelm this church in a very short time with a deluge of Unitarianism, that is, of Mahometan Infidelity.\*

The destruction of three and twenty thousand was occasioned by the Israelites associating with the people of *Midian*, who invited them to the feasts of their idols ; in consequence of which, they fell into shameless fornication after the manner of the Heathens. And as there were wicked Midianites and Moabites in the neighbourhood of the camp, so is there a wicked world always near at hand, ready to invite and seduce the servants of God by its ensnaring customs and diversions. To mix with the world on all occasions, and not be corrupted by its ways, is almost as unlikely, as that the Hebrews should go to an idol-feast with the Midianites, and not be the worse for it. What is the natural tendency of many, and even the design of some public diversions tolerated among Christians, but to corrupt youth and give opportunities to vice? How are most of the scenes of public diversion

\* See *Priestley's Sermon on Free Inquiry.*

crowded with the *daughters of Midian*, who are well aware, that what is there to be seen, and heard will seldom fail to encourage the vicious, and betray some of the innocent, into their snares! Wherever any public meetings have this tendency to corrupt the manners, we may call them by what names we please, but they are as *Moab* and *Midian*, if they are the enemies of Christian virtue.

*Balak*, the king of the Moabites, hated the camp of Israel, and bribed *Balaam*, a prophet, to *curse* them. Just thus doth the world hate the church, and is never happier than when it can hire the ministers of the church to turn against it and betray its interests. But it can no more succeed by all its curses than the wicked *Balak* could: it must seduce Christians to *sin*, and then it prevails; not by its own power, but by tempting the church to provoke the anger of God. When *Balaam* found that he could prevail nothing by his sacrifices and enchantments, then he gave counsel to *Balak* to corrupt the people of the camp with fornication; and that soon answered the purpose.

But now we are to learn another lesson, from the example of those who are said to have *tempted Christ* with their impatience

under the ways of his providence. When the people expected to see an end of their journeyings, it pleased God still to lead them round about; but being weary of this unsettled life, we are told, that *the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way* :\* and, to punish their impatience on this occasion, fiery serpents were sent to destroy them. But when Moses prayed for them, he was directed to place a serpent on a pole,† and when they who were bitten looked up to it, they were saved from death. Our Saviour hath applied this to the lifting up of himself upon the cross, where the serpent that hath the power of death, was to be vanquished; that they who are wounded by sin, and in danger of eternal death, may look up to him and live. What was the offence of the people? It was impatience. What was their punishment? They were delivered to the power of the destroyer. What was the remedy? They were directed to look up to a figure of the cross. And where should the impatient now look up, but to Jesus the author and finisher of their faith; that great example of patient suffering, who for

\* Numbers xxi. 4.

† In the Heathen Mythology, a serpent, twisted about a stick, is the emblem of health, and the ensign of *Esculapine*.

their sakes endured the cross and despised the shame of it. If we are tempted to *be weary and faint in our minds*, when the Providence of God is leading us by some tedious and disagreeable way against our will, then we are to look up to this pattern of patience, and to consider, how he took the painful way of the cross, and submitted his own will to the will of God. With this example before us, let us ask ourselves, whether we have any thing to complain of; we who ought to have been there instead of him! In his death we see the victory that overcometh the world. For the joy that was set before him, he waited till the great work of our salvation was finished: and we are to wait in like manner, till all the designs of Providence are accomplished in us; for we can inherit the promises on no other condition: *He that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.*

But salvation, such as God hath promised, is not an object to all men. Some have no opinion of it; as there were those among the people in the wilderness, who *thought scorn of that pleasant land* to which they were going. When the spies who were sent to view the land of Canaan, made their report of it, and brought back with them some of its fruits,

they differed very much in their accounts. They who proved faithful and told the truth, said it was an exceeding good land, flowing with milk and honey; and that they were well able, with God on their side, to take possession of it, and overcome the inhabitants, whose *defence was departed from them*. Others *brought up an evil report of the land which they had searched*: they described it as a land which ate up, that is, starved its inhabitants; and that these were men of a gigantic stature, to whom ordinary men were but as grasshoppers. This latter report found too much credit: and the congregation was so discouraged and terrified by it, that they *lift up their voices and wept*; and they murmured against Moses and Aaron for bringing them into these insuperable difficulties, and even determined to make them another captain and go back. This is the act of unbelief for which they were doomed to fall in the wilderness, without being permitted to see that land which they would take no pains to win.

Such is the case of those fearful minds and faint hearts, which say *there is a lion in the way*, and magnify all the difficulties of the Christian warfare. The heavenly land, as they conceive it, and as they hear from peo-



*not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able, but will, with the temptation also, make a way to escape that ye may be able to bear it.*"\*

This is the doctrine we are to learn from their history. He that standeth may now fall through unbelief, as they did : he that has been brought out of Egypt, may fall in the wilderness ; therefore let us *pass the time of our sojourning here in fear*. But then, as God is still with us, we are never to be discouraged in the time of trial, nor to doubt of his protection. If there is a sea on one side, and a host of Egyptians on the other, and there seems *no way to escape*, the waters shall be divided, and the Egyptians shall be overthrown. If there is neither bread nor water in appearance, some improbable causes shall give us a supply of both : some flinty stone shall become a springing well, and the heavens above shall give us meat enough. Then for the sicknesses of the soul, we have the remedy of the cross ; and against the gigantic race of Anak, a defender who will never leave us nor forsake us : howsoever great and formidable the enemies of the Christian may appear, *Greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.*

\* 1 Cor. x. 12, 13.

Though it is the design of these Lectures rather to interpret the scripture than to apply it; yet we are to consider the application as the end, and the interpretation as the means: therefore I cannot help indulging myself sometimes in dwelling upon the moral part, which is the most edifying of all. The history of the church in the wilderness is figurative, and we have learned what it signifies: but what good will this knowledge do us, if there is no counsel with it? What shall we gain by seeing how men were lost, unless we take advice from thence, and learn how we may be saved? I therefore do not spare, when occasion offers, to add to my interpretations such spiritual advices as arises out of them. The length and labour of my undertaking is the greater upon this account; but I hope your profit will be greater in proportion. The church that went from Egypt to Canaan gives us an example of every thing that can happen to the Christian church from the beginning of it even to the end of the world: therefore no historical figure of the scripture is of more importance to us than this journey of the Hebrews through the wilderness; and I ought not yet to lay it aside. For there are two particulars remaining, which are of great signification: the one

is the rebellion of Corah, and the other is the settlement of the church in Canaan, a land of the Gentiles.

*St. Jude*, in his Epistle concerning the corruption of the church, speaks of some who *perished in the gainsaying of Core*: therefore the same evil which happened in the church of Moses, is to be found in the church of Christ, and it behoves us to consider what it was. *Corah* and his company had no dispute about the object or form of divine worship: they questioned none of the doctrines of the law; they rose up against the persons of Moses and Aaron; that is, against the civil and ecclesiastical authority; contending that themselves and all the congregation had an equal right; that Moses and Aaron had taken too much upon themselves; and by exercising an usurped authority were abusing and making fools of the people. This was their sin, and they maintained it to the last, and perished in it. It was the dispute of popular power against divine authority: and wherever the like pretensions are avowed by Christians, and the same arguments used in support of them, there we see the *gainsaying of Corah*. It is a lamentable circumstance attending this sin, that it inspires great bold-

ness and obstinacy, such as we read of in *Corah* and his party. Other sinners are apt to be ashamed of themselves; but these never; because they assert their own sanctity in the act of their disobedience. When they set up human right against that which is by God's appointment; the more proud and obstinate they are, the more colour they seem to give to their pretensions. It is one reason why rebellion was so severely punished in *Corah*, and is now so severely threatened in the New Testament, that men are never known to repent of it. In vain did Moses exclaim and remonstrate against the wickedness of *Corah*: he and all his party preserved the same good opinion of themselves, and persisted in it to the last; even appealing to God himself, though they were risen up against God's ministers; till the earth opened; and the fire devoured them.

From this example of *Corah*, we are to learn, that God considers all opposition against lawful authority, as a sin against himself. He declares that *rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, and stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry* :\* the meaning of which, as it stands in the book of *Samuel*, is this; that if a man

\* 1 Samuel xv. 22.

were a Jew, and yet a rebel, he might as well be an Heathen : if he were too stubborn to submit to the ordinances of God, he might as well be a sorcerer, or serve idols. And it is worthy of observation, that this severe sentence is against *Saul*, a king, who usurped the authority of the priesthood, and pleaded a godly reason for it. But so jealous is God, for the wisest ends, upon this subject, that no dignity of person, no appearance of reason, is admitted in excuse for the sin of rebellion. We therefore rightly pray in the Liturgy of the Church of England, that God would deliver us from rebellion in the state, and schism in the church ; and in order to this, we should also pray, that he would deliver us from the principles out of which they proceed ; for none of our reasonings will prevail in this case. —For my own part, I must confess, that if there be any man who is so far infatuated as to have persuaded himself that God is no proprietor of power in the world of his own making and governing, and that all men are born to a state of equality ; I would no more reason with that man, than I would preach temperance to a swine, or honesty to a wolf. I would leave himself to himself, and turn toward those who have not yet received the infection.

The settlement of the church of the Hebrews in Canaan, a land of the Heathens, is the last article I am to explain, as prefigurative of the Christian church. It is mentioned as such in the apology of St. Stephen against the Jews: *Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, which also our fathers that came after brought in with Jesus (i. e. Joshua) into the possession of the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers.*—The doctrine, of all others most unacceptable and odious to a Jew, was this of the translation of the tabernacle of God to the Gentiles. St. Stephen therefore does not literally affirm it, but covertly, and, as a prophet should do, under the shadow of that ancient history which was intended to foreshew it. The Jewish church derived much danger from its situation among the Canaanites; for though God had driven them out as possessors, and established his own people in their land, he left some of the former possessors to be thorns in their sides for trial and punishment: and their history shews how often they were ensnared, by the abominable doctrines of idolatry, until the captivity of Babylon was the reward of their apostacy.

Wonderful was the settlement of the Jews

in Canaan, with the fall of Jericho, and the victories of the people of God against all the armaments and confederacies of their enemies. But not less wonderful was the establishment of Christianity amongst the Gentiles. Heathenism was in as full and quiet possession of the world and its empire at the coming of Christ, as the Canaanites were in their own land when Joshua entered it. But the voice of the gospel preached by a few fishermen from among the Jews, a people held in the utmost contempt of the whole heathen world, soon cast down all the highest fences of Satan's kingdom, as the walls of Jericho fell down at the sound of rams' horns blown by priests. As the Hebrews in the progress of their victories were exhorted to fear nothing, remembering how Pharoah had been subdued in Egypt; so ought Christians to remember daily, how God reduced the power of Satan all over the heathen world, till his temples were destroyed, and the churches of Christ were placed upon their ruins.

But then, as there was a remnant of the Canaanites, to whom the people were frequently joining themselves in marriage, and consequently relapsing into idolatry, according to that of the Psalmist:—*They did not de-*

*stroy the nations concerning whom the Lord commanded them, but were mingled among the heathen, and learned their works, and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them:* so the works of heathen authors, with the fables of their false gods, the abominable rites of their religion, and the obscenity and immorality of their practices, are in like manner remaining among Christians; and it has been the custom for ages, all over Europe, to communicate the rudiments of languages and learning to young minds from heathen books, without due care to caution them against imbibing heathen principles; by which thousands of minds are corrupted, and through early prejudice rendered incapable of understanding the value of truth, and the abominable nature of heathen error. How frequently are heathen moralists applied to, when the finest rules of human prudence for the conduct of life are to be found in the scripture. But to go to the heathens for divinity, as some authors do, is intolerable. They blow out the candle of revelation, and then go raking into the embers of paganism to light it again. Many good and learned men, of the first ability and taste, have observed and lamented the bondage we are under to heathen modes



of education: but custom is a tyrant which hears no reason. However, there can be no harm, and I hope there will be no offence, in praying that God will enable us to correct all our errors from the history of past miscarriages. This is the great use we are to make of our present subject. The dangers to the souls of men are the same in all ages; and their errors are the same for sense, however they may differ in form: so that we cannot be surprised and ensnared by any temptation that comes upon the church, if we look to the things that are past.

## LECTURE VIII.

ON THE PERSONAL FIGURES, OR TYPES, OF THE SCRIPTURES; PARTICULARLY THOSE OF MOSES AND JOSEPH, PROPOSED BY ST. STEPHEN, IN HIS APOLOGY TO THE JEWS.

THE Scripture would have supplied us with much more matter of the same kind with that in the two preceding Lectures. I might have set before you the history of *Gideon's* victory, and the fall of *Sisera*; which were signs of the spiritual victories of the church over the enemies of her salvation.\* I might have considered the rejection of the Jews, as it was prefigured in the histories of *Cain*, and *Abel*, of *Jacob* and *Esau*, of *Isaac* and *Ishmael*, of *Ephraim* and *Manasses*: to which I might have added a view of their present state, as signified by the fall of the proud *Nebuchadnezzar*, and his temporary banishment amongst the beasts in a state of insanity, till the times of judgment passed over him. The grace of God to the *heathen* world, in admitting them to the salvation of the gospel, might have been

\* See Isaiah ix. 4. Psalm lxxiii. 9.

exemplified by the healing of *Naaman* the *Syrian*, and the visitation of the widow of *Sarepta*: which two cases our Saviour pointed out to the Jews at Nazareth; but they would not bear the most distant hint of the reception of the Gentiles; and were so filled with wrath, that they would have thrown him down headlong from the brow of an hill, (after the Roman fashion,) as an enemy to his country; for so were traitors punished at Rome, by being thrown from the top of the Tarpeian Rock.

Many figures are to be found in the occurrences and circumstantials of the history of the gospel by those who read it with such an intention. In short, the history of the Old and New Testaments hath a secondary or prophetical sense in many instances: its great events were signs and figures of *things not seen as yet*; and many of them are in force as such to this hour. Great things are still to be expected, of which we can form no conception, but as they are set before us in the figures of the sacred history. God shall descend, and the earth shall be on fire, and the trumpet shall sound, and the tribes of mankind shall be assembled, as formerly at Horeb. Distress shall come upon a wicked world, when

its iniquity shall be full, as once upon Babylon, and afterwards upon the apostate Jerusalem. The armies of the Lord shall encompass it; and it shall be overthrown, with them that dwell therein. For this reason, the visitation of Jerusalem was foretold in such terms by our blessed Lord, that, in many of his expressions, it is hard to distinguish, whether that, or the end of the world, is to be understood.

These things, however, I must at present leave to your meditation, and go forward to the figurative histories of *individual persons*; such as were the prophets, kings, heroes, and saints of the Old Testament; who, by their actions, as well as their words, *foreshewed the coming* of that Saviour, in whom, the saint made perfect through sufferings, the conqueror, the prince, the priest, and the prophet, were to be united. As the things which befel the church at large, happened to them for ensamples to the whole congregation of Christian people; so the things which befel the prophets of old happened for ensamples of the Saviour himself; that his character and history, as the true Son of God who should come into the world, might be infallibly ascertained and demonstrated, by a comparison with the

various characters of those who had been most eminent in the church of old. Some of these characters were extremely different from others, and the events of their history very unlike ; but the character and history of the Messiah was to comprehend them all. For this end their lives were purposely conformed by the Divine Providence to the image of him that was to come after.

This consideration, when we see the force of it, will reconcile us to some strange things, which might appear very unreasonable, if they were to be considered only in themselves, not under the relation which they bear, and were intended to bear to higher and greater things. How monstrous would it seem in any other history, that a man should be buried in the body of a fish, and cast up alive again after three days upon the dry land ! But if this strange thing happened, that it might afterwards be compared with the return of Jesus Christ from the dead, for the salvation of all mankind ; then the preservation of Jonah becomes fit and reasonable ; it being of infinite consequence to the world, that the fact of Christ's resurrection, when it should happen, should be admitted and believed ; and so the case was worthy of the Divine interposition,

Jonah was not preserved by a miracle for his *own sake*, but for a *sign*, to instruct the people of God in the truth of their salvation, and the peculiar means or mode of it. Two strange events of the same kind are more credible than one; because the objection is removed which might arise from the singularity of the case. The resurrection of Christ is a true fact, and a credible fact: for why? it was foreshewn by the preservation of Jonah; another fact of the same kind. And again, to take the matter the other way; the preservation of Jonah was a miracle, worthy of God, from its *relation* to the *resurrection of Christ*; the most important fact in itself, and the most necessary to be believed, of all that should ever happen from the beginning of the world to the end of it. Jonah's deliverance was intended to do what the apostles were sent over the world to do, *viz.* to witness the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Our Saviour himself hath directed us to make this use of Jonah's history. The Jews required of him some miraculous fact as a testimony that he was the true Messiah: and he gave them this; *As Jonah was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.\** Here the person of

\* Matthew xii. 30, 40.

Jonah is a sign of the person of Christ, and the belly of a devouring fish, a sign of the power of the grave, by which he should be detained for the same time as Jonah was.

The lives of the other prophets had a like relation to the times and transactions of the gospel. From a passage which is taken out of the 41st Psalm, and applied to the treason of Judas ; it appears that some of the most remarkable circumstances in the life of the Prophet David were prefigurative of other parallel circumstances in the life of Christ. It is observed by our Saviour himself, that in the treason of Judas, that *scripture was fulfilled*, which saith, *he that eateth bread with me hath lift up his heel against me*. The familiar friend of David, whose treachery is here complained of, was Ahithopel, to whom these words, in the letter of them, must be supposed to have referred : but if they were *fulfilled*, as our Saviour saith, *in Judas*, then they were prophetic ; and the suffering of David from a traitor, foreshewed that the true David should be a sufferer from a person of the same character. Ahithopel, a man entrusted with the chief management of David's affairs, took part against his master, and betrayed him to those who sought his life : and Judas, in like man-

ner, being first entrusted by his master, betrayed him to the chief priests, that he might be put to death. But now let us mark the sequel; for both these traitors came to the same tragical end: they both *hanged themselves*, when they failed of the success which their ambition aimed at: and if Judas had studied the Scripture as much as he studied the world, he might have foreseen his own fate in that of his brother traitor Ahithopel. Unless the character of David, as a prophet, had a relation to the person of Christ, how can we account for it, that the name of *David* is applied to him by *Ezekiel* \* four hundred years after the natural David was dead? On what other principle could David speak such words in the 16th Psalm, as could be verified only in the person of Christ? *Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine holy one to see corruption*. Concerning this passage, St. Peter argued with the Jews, that it could not be meant of David himself, the memorials of whose death and burial were still remaining among them. That the Providence of God did exhibit in the person of David a character prefigurative of the Messiah, can never be doubted if we compare

\* Ezekiel xxxvii. 25.



their characters together: both were shepherds, prophets, kings, and conquerors; both were despised and set at nought by their brethren; oppressed and persecuted by the powerful; ungratefully reviled, mocked at, and betrayed, by rebels and traitors; and both were raised to the throne of Israel (called the *throne of David*) in opposition to all the power and malice of their enemies. From this similitude of character, all men might infallibly distinguish the true son of David, when he should have fulfilled his course, and attained the kingdom on the holy hill of Sion.

In the Prophet *Elijah*, we have a character prefigurative of the person and office of *John the Baptist*: whence it is said in the 4th chapter of Malachi, *Behold I will send you Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord, and he shall turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, &c.* The scribes and pharisees, who took this passage literally, expected that the prophet Elijah (whom the New Testament calls Elias) would appear *in person* before the coming of the Messiah, and therefore, at the crucifixion, they observed of Jesus with a sneer, that though he had not as yet received any testimony from Elias, he might do so, even upon the cross, if they did

but give him a little more time;—*Let be*, said they, *let us see whether Elias will come to save him.\** By those whose minds were enlightened, it had been understood, not that the *person* of Elijah should come again, but the *character*; that the *spirit* and *power*† of that Prophet should be revived and fulfilled in the character of the Baptist. Let us therefore compare them together. As to their personal appearance, we read that Elijah the Tishbite *was an hairy man,†* (probably with a rough garment,) *and girt with a girdle of leather about his loins.* And do we not read of John the Baptist his counterpart, that he also had *his raiment of camels' hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins?* With respect to their manner of life, Elijah frequented the wilderness, and was fed in solitude: and John the Baptist *was in the deserts, and came preaching in the wilderness of Judea, and his meat was locusts and wild honey*, proper to a man of a contemplative and holy life. In their office and ministry, which give importance to the other marks of their character, both of them were raised up for the great work of *reforming* a degenerate people, and turning to God those who had departed

\* Matthew xxvii. 49.

† Luke i. 17.

† 1 Kings xix. 4.

from him. Elijah brought over to Jehovah thousands of the people who had revolted to Baal : and John the Baptist warned a generation of vipers to flee from the wrath to come ; and prevailed upon them to receive that *baptism of repentance* which was preparatory to the baptism of the gospel. Elijah bore his testimony without fear against two kings, Ahab and Ahaziah ; one of whom was urged on by that wicked woman Jezebel, who had determined to put that prophet to death. So did John boldly rebuke Herod, a king under the influence of another wicked woman, who sought his life and succeeded. Thus we understand how far these two were alike in their persons, their manners, and their ministry ; and with what propriety it was said of John by the angel, that he should go before the Lord God of Israel *in the spirit and power of Elias*. There is something very remarkable to our present purpose in the testimony our Saviour gave to John, as being the person in whom the character of Elias was fulfilled : *I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatever they listed, as it is written of him.\** These last words plainly refer us to what was written of Elijah ; from

\* Mark ix. 13.

whose history it might be foreseen, what would become of John the Baptist; namely, that a wicked and powerful woman should thirst after his blood, and that a king should send his officers to take away his life. This was what they *listed to do* against *Elijah*: therefore when Herodias persecuted the Baptist, and Herod sent an executioner to behead him, they acted according *as it was written*. Elijah was miraculously preserved to be carried up alive into heaven: whereto John followed him, in a way more agreeable to the spirit of the Gospel the way of martyrdom.\*

We find another figurative character in the person of Isaac the son of Abraham, whose sacrifice and deliverance were descriptive of Christ's death and resurrection. *Abraham*, says the Apostle, *offered up Isaac, accounting that God was able to raise him up even from the dead; from whence also he received him in a figure.*† The history of this transaction informs us, that *on the third day* Abraham lift up his eyes, and saw the place where his son was

\* If the reader should be pleased with what is here said, he will be much more pleased with *Considerations on the Life and Death of John the Baptist*, by Dr. Horne, the present Dean of Canterbury.

† Hebrews xi. 19.

to be offered up. He *laid upon* Isaac the *wood* on which he was to suffer, as Christ carried his own cross: and when the knife was lifted up to slay him, the angel of the Lord interposed, and Isaac was received, as it were, from the dead; having been actually devoted to death in the mind of his father for *three days*. In his substitute the ram, a real sacrifice was offered, as Abraham had expected, and Isaac was still alive; so that in the one we have a figure of the death of Christ, in the other of his resurrection. And to render this transaction more descriptive, the providence of God directed Abraham on this occasion to the *mountains of Moriah*, where the temple of Jerusalem was afterwards built; in which the lamb Christ Jesus was daily offered up for many hundred years in the sacrifices of the law; and where Christ himself at length suffered; accomplishing all the offerings of the law, and fulfilling the sacrifice and figurative resurrection of Isaac. The 11th chapter\* of the Epistle to the Hebrews, in which the history of Isaac is treated of,

\* A learned Dignitary of this Church, who is *mighty in the scriptures*, hath composed a series of discourses, equally excellent and edifying, upon the several characters of the faithful in this chapter; which I hope he will not forget to publish in due time.

would afford us many other examples of illustrious persons whose actions and sufferings were conformed to the character of that Saviour in whom they believed. But of all the personal histories which have a prophetic relation to the sufferings and exaltation of Jesus Christ, none are so full to the purpose as those two characters of Joseph and Moses, which were selected by the blessed martyr St. Stephen, in his apology against the Jews: which apology, when rightly considered, opens a wonderful scene, and carries us very far into the prophetical imagery of the scripture. St. Stephen, in his disputes with the adversaries of the gospel, had argued in such a manner, from the figures of the Old Testament, to vindicate the sufferings and demonstrate the verity of the mission of Jesus Christ, that none could *resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake.\** And at length, in his speech before the High-Priest, at his trial, we have the method and substance of his reasoning; of which I am now to make my use, so far as it relates to the present part of our subject. The design of this discourse, and the drift of the argument, may be collected by comparing some passages of it together.

\* See Acts, chap. vi. 7.

Having reminded the Jews, in the first place,\* that the promises of God, and the hopes of the fathers, did not rest in a temporal or worldly inheritance, as they had falsely flattered themselves; he lays down the histories of Joseph and Moses, with the persecutions they underwent from their people, and the interposition of God for their exaltation: and then, to shew his *meaning* in all this, he makes the following application, for the conviction of his hearers, who had been the persecutors of Jesus Christ. “Ye stiff-necked, “and uncircumcised in heart and ears, (who “from your disobedience are not able to “hear and understand what the law has declared to you,) ye do always resist the Holy “Ghost: as your fathers did, so do ye. Which “of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? And they have slain them which “shewed before of the coming of the Just “One, of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers.”† This application shews us with what design he had reminded them of the reception which Joseph and Moses, those two eminent characters of the

\* See the beginning of the 7th chapter of the *Acts*.

† Acts vii. 51.

law, had met with. He meant to shew them, that as these favourites of heaven, which God had commissioned to be the saviours of their people, were opposed and persecuted; so had they now, in like form and manner, opposed and persecuted the Just One, Jesus Christ; and, in so doing, had fulfilled the scripture, and done all that was wanting to confirm the truth of his divine mission; inasmuch as none could be the true Saviour, according to the scriptures, but a person rejected by them, as these holy prophets had been rejected by their forefathers.

Such is the purport of St. Stephen's apology; and, with this key, we are prepared to examine the particulars. He enters on the character of Joseph with these remarkable words: *The patriarchs moved with envy sold Joseph into Egypt.* Who were the enemies of Joseph? The patriarchs; his *own brethren*, all against him to a man. Having first plotted together to take away his life, they *sold* him, and then shewed the marks of his *blood*, that his father might be assured he was dead. The strangers, to whom he was given up, carried him far from his family, and placed him among Heathens, in the land of Egypt. All these particulars were exactly verified in the person of Christ:



his *brethren*, moved with *envy*, sold him for money, and delivered him to the Gentiles. The brother who advised\* the selling of Joseph, that some *profit* might be made of him, was Judah, who answers even in his name to the traitor that sold Jesus Christ: but the guilt which attends his name extends to the whole nation of the Jews, of whom Judah, among the twelve patriarchs, and Judas, among the twelve apostles, were the representatives. *Envy* was the motive on which the patriarchs sold Joseph; and Christ was accused and condemned on the same principle, according to the opinion of his judge; of whom two of the evangelists relate, that Pilate knew the chief priests had delivered him *for envy*. When Joseph declared his dreams, which signified his future superiority over his whole family; his brethren hated him yet the more for his dreams and for his words; and persuaded themselves they should prevent his advancement by selling him for a slave: but this was the circumstance without which his advancement could not have happened: he had never been a ruler and a prince, if he had not been sent into Egypt as a slave, and to prison as a

\* See Gen. xxxvii. 26.

malefactor. So when Christ asserted his own dignity, his brethren took up stones to cast at him for making himself the Son of God: and when he told them they should see him coming in the clouds, and sitting at the right hand of power, they pronounced him to be guilty of blasphemy, and inflicted those sufferings which were necessary to his exaltation. They sold him into the hands of the Romans, to be treated as a *slave, scourged and crucified*. With the kingdoms of the Gentiles, to whom his brethren delivered him, he remains to this day; and thither they must come after him, if they are to meet with him, as Joseph was followed by his family into Egypt.

Much more might be said to shew how exact the parallel is between the history of Joseph and the history of Christ, if we were to pursue it. We see Joseph in company with two malefactors in the prison, and promising life to one of them: we see him endued with such *wisdom*, that even Heathens were obliged to own that this Hebrew spoke by the Spirit of God; and they were content that he should receive the power and glory of dominion amongst them; while his brethren had rejected him as an insignificant dreamer. One circumstance, however, I must not pass over, which is par-

ticularly noted by St. Stephen; that *at the second time Joseph was made known to his brethren*. At the first meeting they knew him not: but after they had accused themselves for being guilty of his death, and had imputed their troubles to its proper cause, then their brother was made known unto them. Thus we trust it will be at last betwixt Christ and the Jews. The time will come, when they shall see the true reason why they have been wandering backwards and forwards, and seeking their bread with anxiety and suspicion, in a strange land; and shall say, with the brethren of Joseph, *We are verily guilty concerning our brother, in that we saw the anguish of his soul when he besought us, and we would not hear; therefore is this distress come upon us.*\* God, who found out the iniquity of Joseph's brethren, and at last opened their eyes to see and confess it, can turn the hearts of the Jews, how hard soever they may be at present, and prepare them for that second meeting, when their Saviour shall be known to them.

Some things which have passed before us in the present Lecture, would suggest many profitable reflections, if I had time to insist upon them.

\* Genesis xlii. 21.

From the office of John the Baptist, which was preparatory to the doctrines of Jesus Christ, we are to learn, that no man can receive the truth of the gospel, unless he is prepared by a *baptism of repentance*, and is ready to forsake his sins. The counsel of God for his salvation can take no effect, till his former evil ways are given up. With an attachment to his old sins and errors, he can neither understand nor approve any thing the gospel offers to him; but will either hate or despise it, and tempt others to do the same; as the Scribes did, who would not accept of John's baptism. Why do not all men receive the gospel, but because some have taken part with the world, the flesh, and the devil, and determine never to renounce them? To all such the gospel is a thing of no value.

From the case of Joseph, and our blessed Saviour, hated and persecuted as they were, we should learn to *suspect* all those whom the world *magnifies*, and not trust to reports and appearances, where self-love and temporal interest are concerned to disguise things. This is a world in which truth is neglected, goodness evil spoken of, and innocence run down and persecuted. It is the constant practice of mankind to misrepresent and defame those

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 p *not seek it where only it is to be found.*  
 this happens because he does not know  
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 rother and the Friend of sinners, ready to  
 take them under his protection, and supply all  
 their wants; but supposes religion to be his  
 enemy, and expects to be roughly handled.

brethren of Joseph did not know him ;  
were distressed with fear and anxiety ;  
Jews did not know Christ, and are to this  
day wandering, restless and hopeless, about  
the world ; and every man will find himself in  
the like condition, till he discovers that the  
religion he is afraid of is his best friend, and  
that God has sent a Saviour before us to *pre-  
serve life, not to destroy it.*

## LECTURE IX.

ON THE PERSONAL FIGURES, OR TYPES, OF THE  
SCRIPTURE.

(A CONTINUATION OF THE FORMER.)

OF all the personal figures of the Old Testament, none are so proper to answer the purpose of these Lectures, as the two characters which St. Stephen proposed to the Jews, as figures and forerunners of Jesus Christ, whom they would not have crucified if they had known him; and they could not have failed to know him, if they had looked to those saints of old, who had foreshewed him in their lives and actions, more plainly than words could have described him.

Notice had been given of this by Moses himself; so that they ought not to have been ignorant. *A prophet*, said he, *shall the Lord your God raise up unto you of your brethren like unto me*: which words are cited by St. Stephen, and marked out for special observation: *This is that Moses, who said unto the children of Israel, a prophet shall the Lord your God raise up unto you, like unto me*: and from the use he

has made of the history of Moses, in the 7th chapter of *the Acts*, it appears that this likeness extends to his whole character, from his birth to his death: as we shall see when we come to examine the particulars. We are likewise taught by St. Paul, that Moses, as a minister and mediator, was faithful in his office, *for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after*: when the Son himself, the great and final Mediator, should take the direction of the house of God, and accomplish the ministry, which is now *witnessed* by the ministry of Moses.

The circumstances fittest for our purpose in the history of Moses, and most remarkable in themselves, are already selected by St. Stephen: to these, therefore, I shall confine myself, and treat of them in the order in which he has laid them down. But that we may first have a distinct view of the particulars, which will come under consideration, it may be proper to observe, that the history of Moses, as here to be applied, comprehends, 1. The circumstances of his *birth*. 2. His qualifications and endowments as the *minister of God*. 3. His office as the *deliverer* of his people. 4. The *reception* he met with from the people he came to *deliver*.



Our blessed Saviour's birth in Judea was rendered very remarkable by the circumstances that attended it, and the character of the time in which it happened.

When the promises of God were about to be fulfilled by the redemption of mankind, and the time foretold by the prophets was drawing near; the nation of the Jews was fallen under bondage to the Roman power, and were subject to Herod, a strange king, jealous of the people he was set over, and apprehensive of a deliverer to be born among themselves. When the report of Christ's birth was brought by the wise men, Herod determined to cut him off; and with this view cruelly slaughtered all the infants in the neighbourhood of Bethlehem. With all this the birth of Moses agrees in every circumstance.

For, 1. *The time of the promise drew nigh which God had sworn to Abraham.* It had been foretold, that the seed of Abraham should continue four hundred years in Egypt, and after that come out with great substance.—When this time of redemption was approaching, the Hebrews were fallen into great affliction under a new king *who knew not Joseph*; who, being probably an alien, had no respect to the merits or memory of him who had been

a saviour to the land of Egypt; looking with a jealous eye upon all his people, as enemies, and treating them as captives and slaves. He had a suspicion that they would become more powerful, and get them up out of his land. To prevent which, he proceeded with subtlety, (as Herod did afterwards,) and resolved upon a massacre of all the male infants of the Hebrews. He first commanded the midwives to kill them; but failing in this, *Pharaoh charged all his people, saying, Every son that is born, ye shall cast into the river. At this time Moses was born:* and a remarkable time it was: a strange new king kept the people of God in subjection, and murdered their infants, to prevent their deliverance. But Moses and Christ, under these wonderful circumstances, were both miraculously preserved, to accomplish the redemption for which they were raised up: and they were both preserved in the land of Egypt. Moses was taken up by Pharaoh's daughter, and escaped from the wrath of a cruel king: and the child Jesus was carried into Egypt by his parents, to escape the wrath of Herod.

The nativity of Christ was dignified by the appearance of a star, and celebrated by an host of angels, though its earthly appearance was

in poverty and obscurity. And some unusual circumstances marked the birth of Moses, though the particulars are not related. He was born of a poor, oppressed people, the child of a slave, and doomed to death by the circumstances of his birth. But his parents were aware of some distinction, which shewed that he was raised up for some great purpose. St. Paul says, *they saw he was a proper child*; St. Stephen, that he was *exceeding fair*; the original is, *fair to God*; from all which it is most reasonable to understand, that some marks of divine favour and distinction were visible about him at his birth. His qualifications and endowments come next under consideration.

He is said to have been *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*,\* and to have been *mighty in words and in deeds*. This character is given of Christ as a prophet, nearly in the same terms. The two disciples who walked with him to Emmaus, described him as *a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people*. When Moses was grown up, he went forth to vindicate the rights of his people, and gave them a sign of his power, by slaying an Egyptian, who did them wrong; casting

\* Compare Luke ii. 52.

out one of their strong men, to shew that a stronger than he was come upon him, and that God had visited his people. So did Christ give a sign of his power as a Redeemer, by rescuing the souls and bodies of men from the bondage of Satan; casting out devils by the finger of God, to shew that the kingdom of God was come upon them.

The Egyptian wisdom, according to the accounts we have of it, delivered all things under signs and figures; speaking to the mind rather by visible objects than by words, and conveying instruction under a hidden form which only the wise could understand. I do not stay to inquire into the reason of this; I only speak of the fact, which is well known to scholars, Moses must therefore have been accustomed early to this mode of delivering science by symbols and hieroglyphics: and we have seen that his whole law is according to the same method, not speaking literally of any spiritual thing, not even of the immortality of the soul, (whence some have ignorantly supposed that it was not a doctrine of his law,) but delivering all things under signs, emblems, and descriptive ceremonies; which they who do not study, are miserably in the dark, as to the wisdom of the Mosaic dispensation.

The wisdom of our blessed Saviour was always conveyed under the same form; all his instructions were given in *parables*, were visible objects signifying intellectual things; and *without a parable spake he not unto them*: which form of speech, they who do not study and delight in, as the medium of instruction which the wisdom of God hath preferred from the beginning of the world, will never see far either into the Old or New Testament.

The mission of Moses bears witness, in the form of it, to the mission of Jesus Christ; and gives us the most worthy idea that can be conceived, both of the dignity and design of it. Both these ministers of God were sent upon their commissions by a voice from heaven. God appeared to Moses in a bush that burned with fire, and said, I have seen the affliction of my people which is in Egypt, and I have heard their groaning, and am come down to deliver them; and, now come, I will send thee into Egypt. So when Jesus was appointed to his ministry, there came *a voice from the excellent glory, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.*

The redemption of the people under Moses, at the Exodus from Egypt, having already been considered as a figure of the world's re-

demption under Jesus Christ, I need not dwell upon it here. I may, however, observe, that as the servitude of the Hebrews was extreme, and their oppression intolerable, when Moses was raised up to redeem them; so was the power of Satan at its utmost height, over Jews and Gentiles, at the coming of Christ. He was permitted to bind and to oppress after a strange manner the sons and daughters of Abraham. And if we consider the state of the Heathens at that time all over the world, we find them under the grossest darkness of idolatry, and the most abominable corruption of manners: so that Christ was wanted by the world of Jews and Gentiles as much as Moses by the Hebrews in Egypt.

On this occasion, we have before us a remarkable sign attending the mission of Moses; which, being insisted upon by St. Stephen, must (like all the other ways of God) have its sense and signification. God appeared to Moses in the desert, from a bush which was on fire, and yet was not consumed. Which is a sign, first, applying itself as an assurance of deliverance from the affliction of Egypt; and, secondly, as a pattern of the incarnation, when God should come down from heaven to redeem the whole world.

The burning bush was an earnest and a pledge to assure Moses that the people of God, though then in a low and miserable condition, (aptly signified by a thorn growing on a desert,) and under a fiery trial in a furnace of affliction, should yet survive it all; as the bush, though in the midst of a flame of fire, was not consumed. According to this model, such should the event be; and such in fact it was, to the Hebrews in Egypt. As God was present in the bush which was not burned, so being present with his people in their fiery trial, and as it were partaking with them in their sufferings, they would certainly be delivered out of them: according to those words of the prophet Isaiah; *In all their afflictions he was afflicted, and the angel of his presence saved them:* which passage some of the Jewish commentators themselves have properly applied to this exhibition of the burning bush, as a sign that God was with his people in their afflictions, to defend and preserve them in the fiery trial.

And if this wonderful spectacle was a sign that God was with *them*, surely it was also a sign that he would be with us in a like form for the salvation of the world from the bondage of sin: that, as the thorn of the desert is the lowest amongst the trees, so should he take

upon himself the form of a servant, the lowest condition of humanity; submitting to serve with us, and be afflicted in all our afflictions; that in and with him we might be enabled to sustain and survive the sharpness of death. That, as the children in the furnace of fire felt no harm, because the Son of God was with them in the midst of it, so should not we be consumed by the trials of this world, or the fire of judgment itself. Herein was it also signified, that the manifestation of God to man should not be that of a consuming fire, but of a benign light and glory instead of it; *a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of his people Israel.* It was signified, that wrath was turned away; that God was reconciled, and that there is *good will* to man from him that *dwelt in the bush.*\*

This appearance of God to Moses is such a testimony to his appearance afterwards in the flesh, that if we lay the whole together as a figure of the poverty of his birth, like that of a root out of a dry ground; of the servility of his condition; of the thorns he bore at his crucifixion; of the glory and brightness of his transfiguration; of the misery of man; the

\* Deuteronomy xxxiii. 16.



condescension of God; the necessity of a Redeemer: in all these things met together in this exhibition of the burning bush, I see a complication of wonders, which cannot worthily be spoken of: we must adore the subject as we can, and leave it to the more adequate contemplation of angels.

The work of Moses in delivering his people was attended with a display of divine power, which shewed how it should be in the other case. *He brought them out*, saith St. Stephen, *after he had shewed wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years.* So it may be said of Jesus Christ, in words to the same effect; “He brought them out after he had shewed wonders and signs; casting out devils, healing the sick, raising the dead, feeding a hungry multitude in the wilderness, and giving every possible demonstration of a divine power, exercised for the deliverance and salvation of the people of God.”

The power of Moses in Egypt, and at the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, was as visible as the sun in the heavens; and it was as plain and certain that he acted by the finger of God, as that he acted at all. But now the argument of St. Stephen leads us to observe,

as one of the greatest of all wonders, how this man of might and wisdom, so miraculously preserved, and so highly commissioned, was understood and received by the people to whom he was sent? For if the forefathers of the Jews had rejected their lawgiver thus commissioned and attested by all the evidences of divine power, then was it so far from being any objection against Jesus Christ, that they had misunderstood him, and hated him, and crucified him; that it was requisite to the truth and divinity of his commission, that his *brethren* should *sell* him, and *cast him out*, as they had done to *Joseph*; and that they should *refuse* him, as they had *refused Moses*. With this argument St. Stephen pressed the Jews, till they were unable to bear the force of it: and, I declare, I think it so forcible at this day, that a man must either be a Christian upon the strength of it, or fall into a rage, like the Jews, if he has an interest against it. Hear how the case is represented;—" *This Moses whom they refused, saying, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer; by the hands of the angel which appeared to him in the bush.*"—He supposed that his brethren would have understood, how that God by his hand

would deliver them ; but they understood not ;—  
 “ This is he,—to whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them, and in their hearts turned back again into Egypt.”

What the high priest and the people of the Jews, before whom St. Stephen pleaded, must have felt in their minds, from such a representation as this, when the fact of rejecting Jesus Christ was fresh upon their memories and consciences, is more easy to be conceived than expressed. There is no occasion on which the mind of man feels more miserable, than when it is convicted without being converted. Such was the case with St. Stephen's hearers ; so they acted like men that were possessed ; they gnashed with their teeth, and stopped their ears, and ran upon him in a fury to put him to death : for so doth bigotry dispose of those whom it cannot answer.

Let us suppose, however, that some one among the rest was prevailed upon to apply the cases of Joseph and Moses, as St. Stephen had stated them, to what had lately come to pass in Jerusalem : then would he have reasoned with himself in some such words as these :—

“ Jesus of Nazareth offered himself to our nation as the true Messiah and the King of the

Jews: yet none of our rulers, or priests, or pharisees, believed on him, but hated him and despised him. What then? Was not the holy patriarch Joseph, with all his innocence and virtue, hated of his brethren, and persecuted for envy? One of the disciples of Jesus betrayed and sold him for a sum of money, and he was delivered to the Romans, as a slave and a malefactor: but so did Joseph's brethren sell him, and so did that innocent victim go down into Egypt, among Heathens, as a slave, and was imprisoned as a malefactor, under a false accusation. Yet did God bring this same Joseph to honour, and made his family, who had despised him, bow down before him; as, they say, God has now exalted this same Jesus, and that every knee is to bow to him. Many and mighty were the miracles of Jesus, such as we could not disprove, and such as were proper to shew that he was the expected Redeemer: but we who were witnesses of them, did not accept of them as such. Thus did our lawgiver Moses come forth to avenge our wrongs upon the Egyptians, supposing that his brethren would understand, from the part he took, that God, by his hand, would deliver them; but they understood not; they accused him for what he had done, and took part with the Egyptians

as we have taken part with the Romans, our task-masters, against Jesus Christ. When Moses undertook to compose the differences of his brethren, and restore them to peace, the aggressor flew in his face, and questioned his authority with those saucy words, Who made thee a ruler and a judge? Thus did we insolently demand of Jesus on every occasion, who gave him his authority; instead of submitting to it, and taking advantage of it for our own good. We represented him not as a Saviour, such as his works proved him to be, but a destroyer, (as they made Moses a murderer,) an accomplice of Beelzebub, the prince of the devils, and the destroyer of mankind. Thus have we done unto him as our fathers did unto Moses: yet was Moses sent of God to bring us out of Egypt; and, therefore, so was Jesus sent to save his people from their sins. When Moses had overthrown the Egyptians, and led our fathers into the wilderness, the people would not obey him, but turned back in their hearts into Egypt, the scene of all their misery: and if we have thrust Jesus from us, it must have been owing to the same cause, a vile attachment to this sinful world, which holds us in bondage, and has made us take part against him with our tyrants and oppressors.

“ Upon the whole, then, our refusal of Jesus Christ can be no argument against him. Moses was undoubtedly sent to be a ruler and deliverer, and we all believe it; yet he was refused by the people whom God sent him to redeem; and though they had been witnesses of all his mighty works, their hearts were not converted. So it hath been with us now; and therefore woe be unto us! *we are verily guilty concerning this our brother*; and what is most to our shame and confusion, our guilt is of such a form as to turn against ourselves, and prove the very thing we have been so forward to deny; namely, that he who was sold like Joseph, hath like him received favour and dominion; that he who hath been affronted and refused, and thrust away by us, as Moses was, is the true lawgiver, whom we have thus conformed in all things to the example of our prophet; even of that Moses, who said, A prophet shall the Lord your God raise up like unto me; and we have done all that was wanting on our part to make the likeness complete.”

Thus must they have reasoned, on whom St. Stephen's argument had the proper effect; and thus would the Jews reason at this day, who know the Old Testament, and have heard

the history of Jesus Christ, if they were not under a judicial infatuation, which God can remove when it is just and fit. We who are not under the like blindness can see how plainly and irresistibly these figures of the Old Testament shew the certainty of those things wherein we have been instructed. When Stephen disputed with the Jews, he took advantage of this evidence, and *they were not able to resist the wisdom and the spirit with which he spake*. When we hear of the effect of this disputation, and find nothing in his speech but a mere narrative of facts compiled from the scripture, we wonder how the Jews could be so provoked by it, more than by reading the Bible according to their daily custom: but when we see how all this is pointed as a testimony to the sufferings and exaltation of Jesus of Nazareth, the wonder ceases; and it is no longer strange, that they whose hearts were not turned to good by it, should be provoked to rage and persecution.

This subject will suggest some important reflections, which I must beg of you to take into your serious consideration, and lay them up in your hearts as long as you live.

1. From the cases of Joseph and Moses,

and more particularly from that of Christ himself, we are to learn, that the qualifications which recommend a person to God, will not make him acceptable or respectable with men, but often the contrary; for among men, innocence is envied, godliness is despised, zeal discouraged, and justice hated. Whence it has been established by wise and virtuous men, as a maxim founded on experience, that the voice of the multitude is never to be regarded as a test of truth or merit.—Fashionable error is a dreadful enemy to the advocates of truth: and there never was an age or country in which error did not get into fashion, and take the direction of men's minds; so that truth has but a poor chance without an overruling Providence to second and enforce it. We have a famous passage to this effect from the greatest moral philosopher of the Greeks, who declared with a kind of prescience, that if a man perfectly just were to come upon earth, he would be *impoverished*, and *scourged*, and *bound as a criminal*, and, *when he had suffered all manner of indignities, would be put to the shameful death of suspension or crucifixion.*\*

\* Several of the Fathers have taken notice of this extraordinary passage in Plato; looking upon it as a prediction of the sufferings of the *Just One*, Jesus Christ; and



There is not a more spotless character in the scripture than that of Joseph; yet his brethren hated him, and their envy had no rest till they had sent him out of their sight as a slave. Moses was a pattern of meekness, and with a struggle of diffidence undertook his commission; a commission, with which he should have been received by a poor oppressed people, like, what he was, in fact, a messenger from heaven. But they railed at him, as if he had only made that condition worse, which was bad enough before; so had provoked those who were already enraged, and had *put a sword into their hands to slay them*. Thus the fearful and unbelieving (who are sometimes found among the wise ones of this world) are always disposed to discourage and condemn a zeal for the cause of God and the rights of his religion, as indiscreet, unseasonable, and dangerous. Whence it follows, that if we are called upon to act in any public character, we must do people good against their will, and take the chance of being ungratefully or even spitefully treated for it. None but the mean-spirited, or the ambitious, or the insipid,

after them it is noted by *Grotius de Veritate*, Lib. 4. sect. 12. *Causabon* (Merick) has a learned and excellent Criticism upon it, in his *Treatise Of Credulity and Incredulity*, p. 135, &c.

or the hypocritical, are spoken well of by all men; and popular applause is the grand object of a vain or knavish disposition. Therefore the Christian is wisely admonished, to seek that praise which cometh only from God; which is never bestowed upon false merit, and will never be wanting to the true.

2. From the example of the Jews, who were only irritated by St. Stephen's arguments, when they ought to have been converted, we see what a dreadful thing it is to have our reasons for hating and rejecting the truth. It is of infinite consequence that we should inquire what that meaneth,—*they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved.* What can be plainer than truth? And what is more amiable? And if it *saves* us, what in all the world is half so valuable? Yet that saving truth is the only truth men cannot of themselves understand: and if they do not understand it, what fearful commotions are raised by it! It is a powerful drug, which will either embitter and inflame the mind,\* or restore it to reason. The bigotted Jew, the ancient Heathen, the modern infidel, the man of levity and pleasure, are all upon a level, all equally adverse to the Christian plan

\* *Stultos facit insanos.* TER.

of salvation ; all equally restless and impatient when the proofs of it are laid before them. Even *Paul* himself (who from the part he took when the blood of *the martyr Stephen was shed*, must have been present at the trial) could hear the martyr's apology without being persuaded by it : that very man, who afterwards struck into the same way of interpretation, and delighted to apply the figures of the law as a testimony to Jesus Christ. There was a time when he was not only deaf, but inveterate, and, as he said, *exceedingly mad* against the Christians and all their arguments. Stephen might look like an angel, and reason like an angel : nothing could touch him. He had an opinion that the Christians were wrong, and deserved to be persecuted : but opinion is that judgment which a man forms of the things of God without the grace of God. When Stephen had reasoned with his hearers, he prayed for them ; and perhaps the conversion of that glorious instrument of God, the blessed Apostle St. Paul, might be granted in consequence of that prayer.

3. We are, lastly, to learn from the deliverance of the Hebrews under Moses, which God was pleased to accomplish by his hand, after all the contempt and opposition he had met with ;

that, however the church, in bad times, may be corrupted and oppressed, and even averse to its own deliverance; yet the counsel of God is sure; and He who hath promised to be with it *to the end of the world*, will never forsake its interests. Kings, with their statesmen and politicians, may be jealous of its rights, and invade them without fear or shame: nay, the time may come, when the very idea of a divine authority, either in priests or kings, shall be as hateful among Christians, as Moses and Aaron were to Pharoah and the magicians of Egypt: and there are too many among us already, who cannot speak of it with patience. But the powers of the world can proceed no farther than God shall permit; and when things are at the worst, and seemingly past remedy, then will the *time of the promise draw nigh*; God shall interpose in what form and manner he sees best; and the church shall be conducted to glory and liberty, as the afflicted Hebrews were led forth to the possession of the land of Canaan.

## LECTURE X.

ON MIRACLES; PARTICULARLY, THE MIRACLES OF THE  
NEW TESTAMENT, AS THEY BELONG TO THE FIG-  
URATIVE LANGUAGE OF THE SCRIPTURE.

WE are prepared to consider the miracles of the gospel, as descriptive of something beyond themselves; because we have already seen how the miracles of Moses, for the saving of the Israelites, are applied in the New Testament, as figures of the saving of all mankind by Jesus Christ. Our Saviour applied the lifting up of the serpent by Moses in the wilderness, to the lifting up of himself upon the cross, to draw all men unto him for the cure of their souls. The Apostle tells us, that the rock which Moses smote, to give drink to the people, *was Christ*; that is, a figure of Christ, smitten for our sins, and giving to a thirsty world the waters of life. Moses fed the people with manna; but that manna was a figure of the *true bread from heaven which giveth life unto the world*. These things were our examples: the miracles wrought for them

were signs of the miracles to be wrought for us. And as it is under the law, so it is under the gospel: the miracles of Christ are not of any private interpretation; but, like the miracles of Moses, with a miraculous effect carry a miraculous signification.

And now, for the right understanding of this whole matter, we are to consider, that the name of *Jesus* was given, because he who bore it was to *save* his people *from their sins*. Sin is the great distemper of man, and salvation from sin is the great deliverance. The want of grace is the greatest want of man, and therefore grace is the greatest gift of God. To save us from sin, and restore us to grace, was the great work which Jesus Christ descended from heaven to accomplish. Every word and every action of his life tended either to effect this, or to give us a right understanding of it: therefore, when we see him working miraculous cures upon men's bodies, we are still to consider him as the Saviour of men's souls; and that he cured their bodies, as a pledge to assure us thereof.

As this is a matter of infinite importance toward the advancement of a Christian in the true knowledge and spirit of the gospel, and not so obvious to common understandings, I have reserved it to my last expository Lecture,

that you may take advantage of all that has gone before: and when you see into the figurative intention of the miracles of Christ, you will want no more of my instructions concerning the language of the scripture.

The wonders which Jesus Christ wrought upon earth in the course of his ministry, were all of a particular sort, because more ends than one were to be answered by them. The world was not only to believe the fact of his heavenly mission, but to understand the design and object of it. Any supernatural act would have shewn, that he was invested with supernatural power; but as the object of his commission was to *save* mankind from their *sins*, all his miracles were *signs* of salvation towards the bodies of men; all explanatory of his great work in redeeming their souls from the fatal effects of sin. He went about *doing good*; and, according to the present state of things under the fall, to do good, is to remove evil; to save mankind, is to undo and *destroy the works of the devil*. The worst of these take place upon the soul; but we cannot apprehend them without some help, because the soul is invisible. When we speak of the faculties of the soul, we are obliged to borrow our words from the faculties of the body; so the evils and distempers of the soul must be signified to us by the

evils and distempers of the body: and both of these proceed from the same cause; for had there been no sin in the soul, there would have been no death in the body. The bodies of men fell into infirmities along with their souls: and it was of God's mercy that it so happened, for we, who take all our notions of the soul and its operations from those of the body, could not otherwise have understood the distempers of the mind: whence it too frequently happens, that they who never were sick, are apt to be ignorant of the weakness of the inward man, and so become confident and self-sufficient;—*thou sayest, I am rich, and have need of nothing, and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.\**

When man was first placed in paradise, his body was in health, and his soul had all its faculties in perfection: and if we would know what a perfect soul is, we must consider what a perfect body is. When the body of man is in a state of perfection, its senses are all perfect. Its sight is quick and strong; its hearing is uninterrupted; its limbs are vigorous and active; it distinguishes all tastes and all odours without error, and in its feelings it is sensible of all the impressions of the elements.

\* Revelations iii. 17.



So when the soul is equal in health, it sees and understands things spiritual; it sees God and his truth as plainly as the eye sees the light of the day; it hears and attends to all important and useful information: it walks with God in the way of his commandments, and even runs with pleasure to do his will, as the angels fly through the heaven for the same purpose: it distinguishes good and evil without error; and, apprehending their different effects and consequences, it relishes the one, and abhors the other: its speech is employed in the praises of God, and will be telling of his wonders from day to day, for it knows no end thereof; it therefore preserves its relation to God, as his *child*, his *scholar*, his *subject*, in *affection*, *attention*, and *obedience*. O blessed state! who can survey this condition of humanity without bewailing its loss, and aspiring to its restoration? For lost it was; and under that loss we are now suffering; and as such sufferers we were visited by Jesus Christ. When sin entered, man fell from this perfect state of mind, into ignorance and blindness of heart; inattention to divine knowledge and instruction; aversion to spiritual things; error of judgment; insensibility of the consequences of good and evil; and inability, as well as

indisposition, to do the will of God. His soul is as a body maimed and distempered: for sin is not only a defect, but a positive disease, including the nature of all the diseases incident to man. The eyes of his mind are blind; its ears are deaf; its tongue is dumb; its feet are lame; its constitution infected with foul distempers; it is agitated with vain cares, cheated with vain pleasures, and distressed with emptiness and want. When the Apostle had this subject before him, well might he exclaim, *O wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* For the life we have upon these terms as natural men, is rather death than life; and so the gospel hath considered it: we are *dead in trespasses and sins*, and the world in which we live is dead unto God.

Now as Jesus Christ came to restore us from this state of disease and death into which we are fallen, all his mighty works present him to us as a deliverer from *these evils*; and therefore while his miracles were *evidences* of his own divine mission, they were *signs* of our *salvation*. They all spake the same sense; and our Saviour himself hath given us a key to the right interpretation of them all: who, when he was about to give sight to a man

born blind, did not proceed to the cure, till he had instructed his disciples in the sense of it, in such terms, as could not be applied to it as a bodily cure. "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world," as if he had said, "I give light to this man born in darkness, as a sign that I give light to mankind, who are all born in the like state. This man is but an individual; and all the persons to whom I shall restore their bodily sight are but few: but a spiritual discernment in the eyes of the mind is necessary to all mankind; therefore I who give it am a *light* to the *whole world*, and I give sight to this man as a *sign* of it."

That the miracle might be more instructive, a very peculiar form was given to it. He moulded the dust of the ground into clay, and having spread it upon the eyes of the man, he commanded him to go and wash off this dirt in the pool of *Siloam*. Here the reason of the thing speaks for itself. What is this mire and clay upon the eyes, but the power this world has over us in shutting out the truth? Who are the people unto whom *the glorious light of the gospel of Christ* cannot *shine*, but they whose minds the *god of this world hath blinded*? So long as this world re-

tains its influence, the gospel is *hidden* from the eyes of men; they are in a *lost* condition; and nothing can clear them of this defilement, but the water of the Divine Spirit sent from above to wash it away. This seems to be the moral sense of the miracle: and a miracle thus understood becomes a sermon, than which none in the world can be more edifying. Our Saviour himself preached in the same way to his disciples, to instruct them in the nature of his mission, and of their own salvation. In short, the gospel is sealed up, and a man may as well read a modern system of morality, unless he sees that Jesus Christ is the physician of human nature, and that a miserable and sickly world is in daily want of his healing power.

The same spiritual turn is given to the miraculous distribution of bread in the wilderness. Christ informed the people, that if they followed him only to eat of this bread, for the feeding of their bodies, they mistook the nature of the miracle. *Ye seek me because ye did eat of the loaves and were filled. Labour not for the meat that perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you.* The meat he then gave was only a figure of that which he gives

in a higher sense to all that believe on him, and which is *meat indeed*; no other in comparison of this being worthy of the name. By *bread* our Saviour sometimes means the doctrine of the gospel, which nourishes the mind: and sometimes his own body spiritually taken in the eucharist: but whether we here understand the bread of the Lord's Supper, or the preaching of the word; both are distributed to the hungry multitude of mankind in the midst of this desert: and a sort of food this is, which, like the manna laid up in the tabernacle (called the *hidden manna*\*) never *perisheth*, but nourisheth the soul to life eternal.

From the curing of the blind and the feeding of the hungry, let us proceed to the raising of the dead. It appears to us as a most wonderful thing, that a dead man should hear the voice of Jesus Christ and return to life: but it is more wonderful that the grace of God and the calling of his gospel should revive a man dead in sin; because, to speak after the manner of men, it seems harder to revive a dead soul than to raise a dead body. And now observe the order of things. The first transgression brought, with it, a present

\* Revelations ii. 17.

death to the spirit of man, and a future death to his body. The power of the gospel brings a present life to the spirit, and a future life to the body; and as the renovation of the spirit is the greater in effect, and most necessary to be understood, the restoration of a dead body, which is more striking to the senses, is exhibited as a visible sign of it. The scripture therefore in many places speaks of the conversion of the soul to a life of righteousness as a rising from the dead; as in Eph. v. 14. where the Apostle paraphrases these words of the Prophet Isaiah, *Arise, shine, for thy light is come*, and gives their full meaning to them; *Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.\** Here *the dead* are of the same sort with those spoken of by Christ in the gospel, *Let the dead bury their dead*; of whom the for-

\* This is delivered as the sense of the Prophet, because it is ushered in as a quotation, *wherefore he saith or it* (that is, *the scripture*) *saith*. The language of the Prophet is an allusion to the rising of mankind from sleep when the sun rises upon them in the morning; but as the Prophet doth not speak according to the letter, the light is the true light of the world, and the sleep is the sleep of death, either natural or spiritual: and so the Apostle hath only translated the words of the Prophet from the letter into the spirit, and given them their true meaning.

mer are the dead in spirit, and the latter the dead in nature. The word *death* has the like sense in the sentence which was pronounced on man in paradise, *In the day thou eatest thou shalt die*: and there are numberless passages of the Old Testament, in which the words *life* and *death* do not signify the natural, but the spiritual life and death. I know not how to understand, but by admitting both a natural and a spiritual resurrection; those other words of Christ, *the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God*; for certainly, the resurrection which *now is* must be that figurative resurrection spoken of by the Prophet and Apostle; and the margin of our Bibles accordingly refers us to such passages as speak of a quickening unto grace. I cannot but understand the raising of Lazarus from the putrid state of death, as a sign that the same power should revive men who had been long dead in trespasses and sins, and seemed to be past grace; as was the case with the whole heathen world.

In the raising of the widow's son at the city of Nain, we have a lesson of this kind worthy of our consideration. "A dead man was carried out, the only Son of his mother, and she was a widow, and much people of the city

was with her." This was a funeral of some pomp, and so we may suppose the young man was a considerable person. Thus, alas, do we see many sons of the church, in the prime of life, in their best days, who seem to know no more that Jesus Christ is near to them, than if they were stretched out upon a bier. Such examples are too often found in low life; but they are much more common among young men of station and fortune; too many of whom are totally insensible to the things of God; lifeless and stupid at prayer; and as indifferent to the word of God from a reader or a preacher of it, as if they did not hear one word that is spoken, and had no concern with that other world, to which, young as they are, time is in the mean while carrying them out; though they may seem to move slowly on, as is the custom in a funeral. Nothing less than that same power which raises the dead can awaken such to hear that voice which is daily calling unto them in the words of the gospel, *Young man, I say unto thee, arise*: hear now the voice of him that hath pity upon thee, and calls thee to rise and be saved; because thou wilt soon be forced to hear that other voice, which shall bid thee rise from the earth to be judged for thy sins.



The cure of sin in all its symptoms and effects is signified by other like miraculous works; such as the deliverance of the body from bondage and imprisonment, from uncleanness, from weakness, lameness, deafness, poison, and madness, or the possession of the devil: all which are so fulfilled in the deliverance of the soul from sin, that the prophets seem rather to have predicted the salvation of which the miracles were signs, than the miracles themselves: that is, they seem to have predicted the miracles rather in the spiritual sense than the natural. Thus where Isaiah\* describes the conversion of the Gentiles as a *blossoming of roses* in a *desert*, and a sound of joy and *singing* in a lonely *wilderness*; it follows, that *the eyes of the blind shall be opened, the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped, the lame man shall leap as a hart, the tongue of the dumb shall sing, &c.* all of which expressions must be applied to the souls of men; for if we understand any of them literally of the body, we shall make the passage inconsistent with itself; or, to make it uniform, we must suppose, that the gospel should be revealed to multiply flowers in a wilderness. Therefore, the inference is easy; that the works of giving sight to the blind,

\* Chap. xxxv.

opening the ears of the deaf, &c. though certainly to be performed by our Saviour in the letter, were to be no more than signs of the salvation foretold by the Prophet.

The misery of man under sin, is like the bondage of an imprisoned captive; and the liberty of those who are made free by the Son of God under the gospel, is like that of a person miraculously brought out of prison. As such the Prophet speaks of it, in a passage which our Saviour has applied to his own ministry. “The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek, he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim *liberty to the captives.*” Who are these captives? Did Jesus Christ come to publish a goal-delivery to debtors and felons? by no means: but he delivers those who are *appointed unto death*, and are *tied and bound with the chain of their sins*: and to give an assurance of it to all men, he miraculously opened the doors of a dungeon, and delivered his servants from their bonds. When this happened to Peter, he supposed it to be a vision: when the Lord thus *turned his captivity, he was like unto them that dream*; but he came to himself, and *considered the thing*; and seeing farther into the

wisdom of God than we do, he probably considered the whole as a scenical representation of that deliverance, which is wrought by him who was sent to *proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*

Sin appears to us in another form, as a loathsome distemper, like the leprosy, which descended by inheritance, and incruited the whole body with a foul humour. So doth that sin, which is in the constitution of man, break out and discover its offensive nature. This distemper, therefore, the great Physician condescended to cure, either by his word alone, or by a miraculous *washing*, to denote the salutary effect of *baptism*. The purification of the Gentiles had been signified long before by the *cleansing of Naaman, the Syrian*, who was ordered to *wash seven times in Jordan*. He supposed, that if water would cure him, the rivers of Damascus would have done as well; but he was taught, that *salvation was of the Jews*: the water that could effect this cure was to be taken from Jordan, where Christ should be baptized; and his baptism was a prelude to the baptism and conversion of the heathen world; whose distemper was afterwards transferred to the worldly-minded Jews, as that of Naaman was

fixed upon Gehazi, the covetous attendant on the Prophet. To show that this cleansing by baptism should not take place upon the Jews, but the Gentiles, our Saviour hinted to those of the Synagogue, that there were many lepers in Israel when this happened, and none of them were cleansed saving Naaman the Syrian. The Jews could bear to hear of any thing rather than the acceptance of the Gentiles; and seeing his meaning they were filled with rage, and would have cast him down headlong as an enemy to his country.

Other miracles of Christ were intended to show how the power of God is necessary to help the impotence of man. He must open our lips before we are able, and furnish us with matter before we know how to praise him or pray to him; therefore the tongue of the dumb was loosed, and even babes and sucklings were empowered to utter hosannas to his name. The deaf were made to hear, because men have ears which neither hear nor understand, nor can attend to the words of divine wisdom, till God has opened them: of which there are many lamentable examples in the gospel, and I wish there were none at this day.

The lame were made to walk, because *the way of man is not in himself*; it is God alone

that enableth us to walk, yea, to run with pleasure and swiftness, as the feet of an hind, in the way of his commandments. In short, all the faculties of man are useless in the service of God, like the limbs of one sick of the palsy, which cannot lift or move themselves till some new strength is communicated. The Prophet instructs us how this should be when God should be revealed. *Strengthen ye the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees*; or, as the Apostle words it, *Lift up the hands which hang down, and confirm the feeble knees; and make strait paths for your feet, lest that which is lame be turned out of the way, but let it rather be healed*.\* which terms are all applied in an intellectual sense to the minds of weak Christians.

Another miracle of Christ, and one of the most considerable, is that of relieving the possessed by casting out evil spirits: the design of which is to teach us, that there is a spirit *working* in the children of disobedience, (the Greek signifies *possessing*† them,) which nothing but the power of the gospel can cast out. When we observe how strangely men err in their judgments; how they hasten towards

\* Heb. xii. 13.

† *Ενεργῶς*, the common name of demoniacs, or possessed people, was *Ενεργημοί*; *Ενεργημένοι*.

their own destruction, maiming their bodies and ruining their fortunes by their vices, as if they *hated their own flesh*; preferring nakedness and wretchedness, and loathsome diseases and infamy, to peace, honour, health, and happiness; we must conclude they are under the working of some malignant power, beyond the mere depravity of nature: for nature would always act in men, as it does in brutes, on a principle of self-preservation. Such as were possessed by the devil uttered horrible noises, and chose a miserable residence among the tombs of the dead. And bad as such a spectacle may be, it is not a worse example of Satan's power, than when we hear a miserable man crying out for curses to descend from heaven, inviting the blastings of lightning on their enemies, or their friends, or themselves; on their souls as well as their bodies. To live naked among the tombs is not a greater symptom of possession, than to fly from God, and his light and truth, and seek after the ways that lead to death. To bruise the flesh in frantic fits of despair is not worse than to injure the health of the body with such excess and riot, as wastes the flesh, and brings wounds and bruises and putrifying sores: yet the world, who are shocked at a madman, look with un-

concern on this moral insanity, because the case is common.

It is a symptom of madness when a man delights in mischief: and how many do we see, who have no greater diversion, than to impose upon the innocent, and terrify people with vain fears, or mock at them when they are betrayed into real dangers.

The wise man, considering how fools make a mock at sin; how outrageous men are in their mirth, how perverse in their ways, how corrupt and irrational in their pleasures, pronounces upon them in plain terms; *The heart of the sons of men is full of evil, yea madness is in their heart while they live, and after that they go to the dead.\** (Ratione expulsâ sensuq. religionis amoto, quæ immanitas, quæ feritas, quæ *dementia* non illico exoritur?†) without true religion to sober them and bring them to a right mind, men are in fact as much out of the way as lunatics; and worse in one respect, that they are still accountable as free agents for that reason which vice has extinguished. The man who does not see and consider that he is come into this world to be saved by Jesus Christ, is an ideot to all intents and purposes

\* *Monita & præcepta Christiana*, p. 104.

† Eccles. ix. 3.

in the sight of God. If he is upon his defence against the power of the gospel, and puts it from him with those words of the demoniac ; "Why art thou come to torment us!" he is a madman of the first class, to whom the poor lunatic, with a sceptre of straw, is a hopeful character.

Miserable is the condition of men under temptation or possession from evil spirits : but the power of grace sets us free from their terrors, with those comfortable words, *Who is he that shall harm you, if ye be followers of that which is good?* As a pledge to assure us of which, our Saviour gave to his apostles an evident superiority over the powers of darkness : *Behold I give you power to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you.\** Who is this *enemy*? The *enemy* of Christians is the *devil* ; and such poisonous vermin as serpents and scorpions are the emblems of him and his children. A miraculous power over these creatures which hurt the body, was an outward assurance to the world, that he who wounds the soul shall have no power to hurt a Christian. When the viper fastened on the hand of Paul, he shook him off into

\* Luke, x. 19.



the fire from whence he came: and thither, into the element prepared for him, shall the devil be shaken off by the faith of those whom he assaults.

Another great miracle, and the last I shall take notice of, is that of our Saviour stilling the raging of the sea, and delivering his disciples in a storm. We, like them, are embarked with Christ in the ark of his church, and are subject to many dangers and terrors upon the waves of this troublesome world. So long as we are in the world, we shall be exposed to the cares and troubles of this mortal life. Sometimes the elevations of pride and ambition lift us up toward the heaven; at other times disappointment and despair oppress us, and the deep threatens to swallow us up: while the Saviour in whom we have trusted seems to sleep, as if he were leaving us to perish in the storm. But the prayer of faith will at last awake him: we are therefore to trust in the worst of times, that he who rebuked the winds and the sea, when his disciples cried out, *Lord, save us, we perish*, will after the same example save us when we pray to him; that he will lessen our cares, and quiet our passions, and restore us to peace, so that there shall be a great calm: the winds

shall drop, the sun shall shine out, and there shall be peace of conscience, which is the greatest calm in this world.

Thus it appears that all the miracles of Christ have a figurative acceptation. From them we learn all the distempers of our souls, and where we are to apply for the cure of them.

To open this subject still farther, I desire you will observe what a curious opposition there is between the miracles of Christ, and the workings of Satan. As the power of Christ was exercised in such works of salvation as were proper to his character as the Saviour of Souls, so there is a surprising agreement between the outward works of the devil on the persons of men, and his inward works upon their minds; insomuch, that his character, as *a destroyer*, is not less evident in the scripture, than that of Jesus Christ as *a Saviour*. From some opportunities Satan had of shewing his power, we see how it is exercised. When some strolling Jews took upon them to deliver one that was possessed, the man, in whom the evil spirit was, leaped upon them, as a lion would leap upon his prey, and they fled out of that house *naked and wounded*. He who here strips men, and tears off their clothes, is

the same that left Adam naked in paradise; who delights still to repeat the same act, or even to see the shadow of it in nakedness and wretchedness: therefore, the poor demoniac, who resided among the tombs, *were no clothes*.\*

When the evil spirits went into the herd of swine, the whole herd ran headlong into the sea and perished. After the same form doth the devil drive men headlong into the gulph of perdition, when he gets the direction of them. He was permitted to possess this unclean herd, that we may thence learn how an unclean life will prepare us to be driven into hell itself by the destroyer. Temperance, sobriety, and devotion, prepare our bodies to be the temples of the Holy Ghost; but impure manners prepare the heart for unclean spirits, and give them the opportunity they desire. We have heard of certain arts to call up the devil; but a man need only live like a swine, and he will be sure to have his company.

A woman who was bowed together for eighteen years, and could in no wise lift up herself, is said to have had *a spirit of infirmity*, and to have been *bound* of *Satan*: whence it appears, that he is the instrument for inflicting unaccountable diseases. It is his will that

\* Luke viii. 27.

none should be able to lift up their minds to heavenly things; and, as a sign of it, he bows their bodies towards the earth.

Those extreme cases, in which men raged and were thrown about, and torn, and tormented of the devil, were permitted to shew us what his inclinations are toward the souls of all men living; that he would deprive them of all reason; disturb their imaginations with fancies of horror and despair; inspire them with cruelty toward themselves; and drive them from the living God into the regions of the dead. Such are the works of Satan; contrary in every respect to the works of Jesus Christ; and men, as their nature now is, being subject to his power, *exorcism*, or the casting out of the evil spirit, was admitted as a part of the office of baptism in the primitive church.

I would desire you to observe, further, in regard to our present subject, that the very same images are used in the 107th Psalm, as in the miracles of Christ, to express the redemption of men's souls from the effects of sin, by the goodness of God. *The redeemed of the Lord* are there called upon to praise him for gathering them out of a wilderness, and satisfying their souls when hungry and thirsty: for breaking their bonds asunder, and delivering them out

of prison, where they were bound in affliction and iron, and sat in darkness and the shadow of death: for healing them by his word, when afflicted with sickness: for delivering them from the perils of the sea, and making the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. All this scenery is well drawn out, and finely applied, by a devout and elegant commentator of our own church,\* who has made the book of Psalms more useful to pious Christians, than it ever was made since the Reformation; and, I may add, before it. From that Psalm, as from the miracles of Christ, we learn the weakness and wretchedness of man, and the goodness of God with the power of his grace. We see the necessity of prayer for the help of God; after the example of those, who *cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and were delivered out of their distress.*

No forms of prayer can be more significant than those which are built upon the miraculous works of Christ. These shew us what our wants are, and thence teach us what we are to pray for: and when we have respect unto them, and the author of them, we mix an act of faith with our petitions, which will

\* The Reverend Dr. *Horne*, Dean of Canterbury, and President of Magdalen College in Oxford.

never fail to render them more acceptable; for we read, that the power of Christ took effect on those only who had faith to be healed. There is not a want of man, nor any occasion in life, on which the miracles of Christ will not supply us with the finest matter of devotion, and in some such form as the following, with which I shall conclude.

“ O Son of David, thou great physician of  
“ souls, who didst once exercise thy power in  
“ the land of Judea, and wentest about doing  
“ good; thou art still with us; and hast promised so to be unto the end of the world.  
“ Have mercy upon us under all the weaknesses of our nature, and succour us under all  
“ oppression from evil men or evil spirits: deliver us from the bonds of our sins, and give  
“ light to us when we sit in darkness: open  
“ our eyes, that we may see the things which  
“ belong to our peace: give us an ear to hear  
“ and understand thy word; and a tongue to  
“ praise and confess thee before men: give  
“ strength to our feeble hands, that they may  
“ be lifted up to thy name, and let our knees  
“ be flexible and ready at their devotions:  
“ cleanse us from our secret faults, as well as  
“ our outward offences: feed our souls with  
“ the bread of life, and let us hunger and

“thirst, that thou mayest satisfy us. Be mind-  
“ful of us, O Lord, in our distresses, when  
“we are tossed about upon the waves of this  
“troublesome world: and in all our dangers  
“of soul and body, stretch out, to save and  
“defend us, that right hand which raised up  
“thy disciple sinking in the mighty waters.  
“In all things let our faith be toward thee,  
“and then shall thy power and mercy be  
“toward us for deliverance and salvation.”

AMEN.

## LECTURE XI.

THE USES AND EFFECTS OF THE SYMBOLICAL STYLE  
OF THE SCRIPTURE.

Now it hath been shewn what the figurative language of the holy scripture is, by an induction of particulars; we may proceed to speak with more confidence concerning the uses and good effects of it. We now stand as it were upon an hill, up to which our inquiry hath conducted us, thence to survey the fruitfulness of the holy land. We have seen that the *law*, in its sacrifices and services, had a *shadow of good things to come*; that its history is an *allegory*; that God used *similitudes* by his *prophets*; that Christ spake in *parables*; that the apostles preached *the wisdom of God in a mystery*; in a word, that the whole dispensation of God towards man, is by signs, shadows, and figures, of visible things. The law of Moses, the Psalms, the Prophets, the Gospels, and Epistles, and most of all the Revelation of St. John, use and teach this figurative language: and, therefore, in the use and interpretation of it must consist the wisdom of



those who are taught of God. *Here is the mind that hath wisdom*, saith St. John, *the seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth*. Where the word *wisdom* is applied to this science of decyphering the figurative expressions in the language of the Revelation. So at the end of the 107th Psalm, wherein the salvation of man's soul is set forth under all the forms of deliverance from bodily dangers, it is added, *Whoso is wise and will observe these things, even they shall understand the loving-kindness of the Lord*. Whatever the form and manner may be after which the divine wisdom is communicated, it must be the best: and such we shall find it, when we inquire how the improvement of man's mind is promoted, and all the purposes of God's revelation answered by the use of this symbolical or figurative style of speaking from the images of things.

1. This method is necessary to assist the mind in its conceptions, and supply the natural defect in our understandings. Being men, invested with an earthly body, which hath a sense of nothing but material things, we cannot see truth and reason, in themselves, as spirits do: these things are of a different nature from our sight; and therefore we are obliged to conceive them as they are reflected

to us in the glass of the visible forms, and sensible qualities, of outward things.

It is the excellence of this mode of speaking, that it is not confined to the people of any particular nation or language; but applies itself equally to all the nations of the earth, and is universal. It was not intended for the Hebrew or the Egyptian, the Jew or the Greek, but for *man*; for that being who is composed of a reasonable soul, and a fleshly body; and therefore it obtains equally under the Patriarchal, Jewish, and Christian Dispensation; and is of common benefit to all ages and all places. Words are changeable; language has been confounded; and men in different parts of the world are unintelligible to one another as barbarians; but the visible works of nature are not subject to any such confusion; they speak to us now the same sense as they spoke to Adam in paradise; when he was the pupil of heaven, and their language will last as long as the world shall remain, without being corrupted.

Thus, for example, if we take the word *God*, we have a sound which gives us no idea; and if we trace it through all the languages of the world, we find nothing but arbitrary sounds, with great variety of dialect and ac-

cent, all of which still leave us where we began, and reach no farther than the ear. But when it is said, *God is a sun and a shield*, then *things* are added to words, and we understand that the being signified by the word *God*, is bright and powerful; unmeasurable in height, inaccessible in glory; the author of light to the understanding, the fountain of life to the soul; our security against all terror, our defence against all danger. See here the difference between the language of words, and the language of things. If an image is presented to the mind when a sound is heard by the ear, then we begin to understand; and a single object of our sight, in a figurative acceptance, gives us a large and instructive lesson; such as could never be conveyed by all the possible combinations of sounds. So again, when we are told of a being whose name is the *devil*, we go to the derivation of the term, and find it signifies an *accuser*; and accusation may be true or false. But, when instead of the word, we have a *serpent*, as a figure of him, we are aware of his nature, and of our own danger. We understand that the devil is *insidious* and *insinuating*; that his tongue is *double*; and his wounds *poisonous* and *fatal*.—When we are told that he is the *prince*

*of darkness*, then we find that he promotes blindness and ignorance among men, as darkness takes away their sight; and that he is contrary to *God*, who is *light*. When the devil is said to be a *lion*, then we understand, that as hunger makes the furious beast wander about the desert in search of prey; so the devil, with an appetite to destroy and devour, is always going to and fro in the earth, to watch and take advantage of the ways of men.

So plain is this sort of teaching, and so effectual, that if I were to begin with the first elements of instruction to a child, I think I would teach this ideal language in preference to all the languages of the world; for this is the life and soul of all the rest, and the best preparation of the mind for receiving the wisdom of God, who hath every where instructed us after this form: which, while it helps the understanding, has a wonderful power to engage the attention, and please the imagination. Man, from his childhood, is strangely delighted with pictures; and the passion lasts to the end of his life: for when the eye ceases to be entertained as a child is, the mind will have its pictures for amusement and learning; and the wisest and greatest among mankind have been captivated by them in all ages.

As philosophy derived much of its influence from the powerful imagery of poetry in the ancient tragedies of Greece; so is the religion of revelation greatly assisted and enforced by its figurative language; always pertinent and instructive; and, on proper occasions, exceedingly sublime and beautiful.

The two ends of poetry, as they are laid down by the greatest master in the art, are *to profit* and *to delight*; to give the best instruction under the most pleasing form. The means it uses for the attaining of these ends, is to inform the mind, by presenting to the imagination those pictures and images of truth, which are to be gathered either from created nature, or the actions of men, and the various scenes of animal and social life. Philosophy and poetry differ in this respect; that the one instructs by words, and delivers its precepts literally; the other by the images of things: and if these images are lively and proper, then the mind is delighted with a moral, as the eye with the effect of a picture. Therefore good poetry, under proper restrictions, is one of the greatest and best works of human art; and hath always been accounted divine, as proceeding from the assistance of heavenly beings. Even in the oratory of prose, the method of

managing well an allusion or comparison, is of great value, because it is of great effect. He is the most agreeable speaker, who can open and adorn the argument of his discourse by some apt representation of truth from the nature of things. But in religious subjects, where it is of the utmost consequence that men should hear attentively, and be persuaded effectually, there this manner is most valuable of all.

How beautiful is that admonition of Saint *James*, from the propriety of the imagery under which the moral is conveyed ! He exhorts to govern the *tongue* ; which, though so small a member of the body, is yet of such great effect, that to govern the tongue is to govern the whole man. “ If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man, and able also to bridle the whole body. Behold, we put bits in the horses’ mouths, that they may obey us, and we turn about their whole body. Behold also the ships, which though they be so great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very small helm, whithersoever the governor listeth.” Nothing upon the subject can possibly exceed the eloquence of this passage : and the Apostle carries on his dis-

course all the way in the same beautiful style of allusion.

How were the lowest among his hearers captivated, when our Saviour discoursed to them in parables; explaining the doctrine of the kingdom of God from the scenes of nature which were daily before their eyes. The constitution of man's mind is still the same, in the rich and the poor, the learned and the ignorant: and the principal on which it must be engaged to receive instruction can never alter. We are to learn all things by comparison; and the salvation of our souls depends so much on our improvement under this mode of teaching, that it is wisely provided by the author of our nature, that we are so much delighted with imitation in every shape. All the representations of the stage, which attract the multitude, are nothing but imitations of characters and scenes of imagery: poetry, painting, and music, all engage the fancy with imitative effects of art. Mirth and sadness, conversation and devotion, the singing of birds, and the confusion of a battle, are all imitable in musical sounds.

But this great plan of imitation is no where so conducted, nor carried to such a height, as in the signs and allegories of the holy scrip-

ture, which compose the richest scenery upon earth. If the fancy of man is delighted with imitation even in the smallest subjects, how much more, when the originals are objects of an eternal nature, and the delineation of them is from that wisdom, to which the things of time and the things of eternity are equally known: and which framed this visible world as a counterpart to the other.

Great is the evidence which arises when these two are laid together and compared; and I have frequently found it such by experience, when I have tried the force of it upon minds to whom it was new. If there be any difficulty in our creed, it is certainly much lessened, if the visible world presents to our senses the figures of those things which God hath proposed to our faith. To those who understand it, all nature speaks the same language with revelation; what the one teaches in words, the other confirms by signs; inso-much that we may truly say, the world is a riddle, and Christianity the interpretation. If Christ is called the *true bread* the *true light*, the *true vine*, and the talents or gifts of God's grace are the *true riches*, &c. then the objects of sense, without this their spirit and signification, are in themselves mere image and de-



lusion ; and the whole life of man in this world is but a shadow, vain and empty, till the *truth* and substance of it is seen and understood.— This relation between things visible and invisible we could never have found out of ourselves ; but when the plan is proposed, it is so reasonable and striking that nothing can resist it, but the blindness of false learning, or the malignity of voice, which has an interest against it. In the style of the scripture, the several objects in the visible creation, from the sun in the heavens, through the elements and seasons, the day and the night, the land and the sea, the fowls of the air and the beasts of the field, down to the grass that springeth out of the earth, and the stones which are scattered upon the face of it, do all fall in naturally as figures to explain and enforce the things that belong to the kingdom of God, and to the soul of man as a part of it. Whosoever meditates upon the world thus applied as a figure of truth, and sees that agreement between nature and revelation which revelation itself hath pointed out to us, will want no miracle to persuade him of the Christian doctrines : for nature itself is Christian, and the world itself a daily miracle : the heavens speak to us, and the earth and all things therein join in the same testimony : so

that if all nations were to disbelieve, nature itself would still continue a faithful witness to the truth: if the children of Abraham were to hold their peace, the stones would cry out.

Here we ought to descend to particulars, and show how the state of nature and the several parts of it agree with the doctrines of the scripture; but there is not room for it on the present occasion: and I have purposely considered *the natural Evidence of Christianity* by itself in two Lectures, which open a prospect into that extensive subject, without attempting to penetrate to the end of it; and to them I must now refer you.

To these advantages of the sacred style, I am now to add that which is the greatest of all, and will justify the attention I have bestowed for several years past, upon the matter of these Lectures; namely, that the spirit of those figures under which the Bible delivers to us the things of God, has a power of raising and glorifying, even in this life, the spirit of man; producing an effect upon it, the same in kind with what it shall hereafter experience when admitted into the presence of God. This is a great thing to say; but I learn it of that Apostle who laboured more abundantly in

opening to us the wisdom of God from the figures of the Old Testament. The same was also signified by our Saviour himself in his discourses with his disciples.

St. Paul teaches the Corinthians, that it is the proper business of the Christian ministry to preach the *spirit* of the law of Moses, and not to rest in the *letter* of it as the Jews did ; whose weakness in this respect was foreshewed by what happened to their fathers, who could not look stedfastly on that glory which shone upon the face of Moses : for which reason Moses put a veil upon his face ; which veil, saith the Apostle, is still upon their hearts in the reading of the Old Testament. So far was the act of Moses fulfilled upon *them*.

But now with respect to *us* Christians, who see the glorious spirit of the New Testament under the letter of the Old, we are not like Moses when veiled, as the Jews are ; but like Moses when turned to the Lord ; and deriving glory to his own face from beholding the light of the divine presence. Just such is the effect of the spirit of the Old Testament on those who are converted and look towards it, through faith in Jesus Christ, who is the spirit and glory of the law : it occasions a transfiguration in man's nature, and derives glory to it, like to

that which fell upon the face of Moses when he had conference with God, and was turned towards him. This is the effect which happens to us according to the sense of the Apostle : whose words, though very obscure when taken independent of the context, will be easily understood after what hath been said ;—" We all, with open (that is, *unveiled*) face, beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord ;" or, as the margin reads, by *the Lord* who is *the spirit* of the law, as aforesaid. Of all which the sense, in brief, is this ; there was a glory on the face of Moses underneath his veil, and there is a glorious spirit under the letter of his law, which they who behold stedfastly are themselves transfigured and glorified after the manner of Moses. Whoever beholds the glory of God is himself thereby glorified, as he who looks at the sun is shone upon by it. All we can see of God in this mortal life is in his word : there that light doth still shine which illuminated the face of Moses ; and they who behold it reflected *as in a glass* from the figures and ceremonies of his law, are *changed* (Gr. *transfigured*) *into the same image, from glory to glory ;* from the glory of the law

which appeared in Moses, to the glory of the gospel which appeared in the transfiguration of Jesus Christ.\*

A sight of that glory which is in the spirit of the law, is not only our privilege, but is absolutely necessary toward the conversion of a natural man into a spiritual one: if it doth not rather presuppose such a conversion; because a natural man can neither receive nor discern the things of the Spirit of God. This was the case of the Jews; they were not able to see the inward Spirit of our Saviour's parables; and so, instead of being converted, they were only condemned by it. "Their ears, said he, are dull of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they should see with their eyes, and should hear with their ears, and should understand with their hearts, and should be converted, and I should heal them." Hence we see, that they who have

\* *Christianis cum legitur (Lex) thesaurus est absconsus in agro—ostendens sapientiam Dei—quoniam in tantum homo diligens Deum proficit, ut etiam videat Deum, et audiat sermonem ejus, et ex auditu loquelæ ejus in tantum glorificari, uti reliqui non possint intendere in faciem gloriæ ejus, quemadmodum dictum est a Daniele; quoniam intelligentes fulgebunt, quemadmodum claritas firmamenta, &c. Irenæi, Lib. 4. c. 48. Irenæus has here fallen upon the very same idea with that before us, though he does not collect it from the same passage.*

the spiritual sense which discerns spiritual things, may be *converted* and *healed*: while they who have it not are only hardened in their unbelief. Instead of improving they grow worse, and are farther from God than ever: "whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath." As it was with Christ in his parables, such to this day will be the success of every preacher of God's word, who keeps up to his profession as a minister of the Spirit: if his hearers do not grow better and become spiritually minded, they will grow worse as the Jews did. The Spirit of God's word which should *convert* and heal them will never prove to be an inactive indifferent medicine: it will either do good or harm; it will operate either towards life; or towards death; it will make men turn to God or drive them farther away from him: which is a serious and fearful consideration; and I pray to God you may lay it to heart. My only desire is to do you good, and I should be sorry to speak to the condemnation of any one soul committed to my charge. But you see how the case is: as the benefit is great; so is the danger: if there should be darkness where there ought to be light, how great will be that darkness!

Such then is the excellence of the sacred style, that is accommodated to our capacities, it delights our imagination, and leads us into all truth by the pleasantest way; it improves the natural world into a witness of our faith; it transfigures us from natural into spiritual men, and gives us a foretaste of the glorious presence of God. If these are the effects of it, it must be of infinite value to particular persons in their several studies and professions.

And first, it is absolutely necessary to a Christian preacher: whose doctrine, if it be after the form of the scriptural imagery, will be more intelligible, more agreeable, and more edifying to all sorts of hearers. If this is the method God hath been pleased to prefer for the teaching of man, it must be the best when one man undertakes to teach another. We have seen how our Saviour's preaching was in the form of parables: how the Apostles in their interpretations of the Old Testament apply it as a figure and shadow of things to come; and how, in their exhortations, they reason from some parallel case in the ways of nature. And still it will always be found, that nothing has such an effect in preaching, as the skilful handling of some image or figure of the scripture. For truth, as we have often ob-

served, does not enter into men's minds in its own abstracted nature, but under the vehicle of some analogy, which conveys a great deal of sense in very few words : and therefore the best preachers have always taken advantage of some such analogy, after the manner of the scripture itself, which gives us the pattern of all true preaching.

Let me show you how this is by an example. Suppose a preacher would persuade his audience not to abuse the station in life to which Providence hath appointed them ; and not to presume upon the character they may sustain among men for a short time here upon earth : he reasons from the transitory nature of worldly things : and this he teaches them to see in a glass, by setting before them the changeable scenery and temporary disguises of men in a theatre. In the world at large, as upon a stage, there is a *fashion* in the characters and actions of men, which *passeth away*, just as the scenery changes, and the curtain drops, in a theatre ; to which the Apostle alludes. The world is a great show, which present us various scenes and fantastic characters ; princes, politicians, warriors, and philosophers ; the rich, the honourable, the learned



and the wise: and with these the servant and the beggar, the poor, the weak, and the despised. Some seldom come from behind the scenes; others, adorned with honour and power, are followed by a shouting multitude, and fill the world with the noise of their actions. But in a little time, the scene turns, and all these phantoms disappear. The king of terrors clears the stage of these busy actors, and strips them of their fictitious ornaments; bringing them all to a level, and sending them down to the grave, as all the actors in a drama return to their private character when the action is over.

From this comparison, how easy and how striking is the moral. Nothing but a disordered imagination can tempt an actor on a stage to take himself for a king, because he wears a crown, and walks in purple: or to complain of his lot, because he follows this fictitious monarch in the habit of a slave. Therefore let us all remember, that the world, like the stage, changes nothing in a man but his outward appearance; whatever part he may act, all distinctions will soon be dropped in the grave, as the actor throws off his disguise when his part is over. On which con-

sideration, it is equally unreasonable in man, either to presume or to complain.\*

One such moral lesson as this, which shows us the real state of things under a striking and familiar resemblance of it, is worth volumes of dull abstracted reasonings. It captivates the attention, and gives lasting information: for when such a comparison hath once been drawn out, the instruction conveyed by it will be revived as often as the image occurs to the memory.

To the scholar, the symbolical language of the Bible is so useful, that every candidate for literature will be but a shallow proficient in the wisdom of antiquity, till he works upon this foundation: and for want of it, I have seen many childish accounts of things from men of great figure among the learned. In ancient times, sentiments and science were expressed by wise men of all professions under certain signs and symbols, of which the originals are mostly to be found in the scripture; as being the most ancient and authentic of all the records in the world, and showing itself to be such in the form of its language and expression.

\* See Dunlop's Sermons, vol. 1. on 1 Cor. vii. 31. *The Fashion of this World passeth away.*

How nearly poetry and oratory are concerned with the science of symbolical expression, has already been observed. With this key, a scholar may penetrate far into the art of poets and orators; and the next thing to composing well is to taste and judge well. But it is also of eminent use for unfolding the religious mysteries of Heathen antiquity.

The Grecian and Roman mythology has been much inquired into by the learned, and is still a great object with them. Whoever considers the form of religious instruction in the church of God, will plainly see, that the mystical or mythological form among the Heathens was derived from it, and set up against it as a rival. It pleased God to prefigure the mysteries of our faith from the beginning of the world by an emblematic ritual: this manner therefore the heathens would necessarily carry off with them; and when they changed the object of their worship, and departed from the Creator to the creature, they still retained the mystical form, and applied it to the worship of the elements of the world; describing their powers and operations under the form of fable and mystery, and serving them with a multitude of emblematical rites and ceremonies. Because the true God taught his people by

mystical representation, they truly would have their mysteries too: and I take this to be the true origin of the fabulous style in the Greek mythology: though it makes a wretched figure in many particulars; as the woolly-headed negro savage does, when we consider him as a son of Adam descended from paradise. The whole religion of heathenism was made up of sacred tradition perverted, a customary ritual, and physiological fable; but the emblematic manner prevails in every part alike; and therefore every scholar ought to be well acquainted with it.

Yet after all, it will be found most valuable to the Christian believer. The knowledge of human languages prepares us for the reading of human authors; and great part of our life is spent in acquiring them. But the interpretation of this sacred language takes off the seal from the book of life, and opens to man the treasures of divine wisdom, which far exceed all other learning, and will be carried with us into another world, when the variety of tongues shall cease, and every other treasure shall be left behind.

We study some human writings, till we are so enamoured with the spirit of them, that it would be the highest pleasure to see and con-

verse with the person, of whose mind we have such a picture in his works. Blessed are they who shall aspire to the sight of God on this principle; for their hope and their affection shall be gratified. They who now see him by faith, as he is manifested to them in his word, shall sit with him in the glory of his kingdom: and then they will know the value of that wisdom, which has led them through the shadows and figures of temporal things, to that other world, where all things are real and eternal.

THE SYMBOLICAL FORM COMMON TO THE WISDOM OF  
ANTIQUITY, PROFANE AS WELL AS SACRED.

(A SUPPLEMENT TO THE LAST LECTURE.)

IT was observed in the foregoing Lecture, that in ancient times *sentiment and science were expressed by wise men of all professions under signs and symbols*. I could not pursue this observation in the body of the Lecture, as being less proper for the pulpit. But it is pity we should drop a matter of so much curiosity and importance without descending to some examples of what I there advanced.

Whoever enters into the learning of antiquity, or, if already learned, recollects what he has met with, will soon discover, that theologians, moralists, politicians, philosophers, astronomers; all who have made any pretensions to wisdom, have used the language of symbols: as if the mind were turned by nature to this kind of expression, as the tongue is to sounds: and indeed this language of signs is, properly speaking, the language of the mind; which understands and reasons from the ideas, or images of things, imprinted upon the imagination,

All the *idols* in the world, with their several *insignia*, were originally emblematic figures, expressive of the lights of heaven and the powers of nature. *Apollo* and *Diana* were the sun and moon; the one a male, the other a female power, as being the lesser and weaker of the two. Both are represented as shooting with arrows, because they cast forth rays of light, which pierce and penetrate all things.

As the objects, so the forms of worship were symbolical: particularly that of dancing in circles to celebrate the revolutions and retrogradations of the heavenly bodies. It was an ancient precept, *ἑστῶντες περιεβαλόμενοι*, “turn round or move in a circle when you practise divine adoration:” that is, do as the heavenly bodies themselves do.

—“that move in mystic dance, not without song.” MILTON.

We find the sacred dance appointed and practised in the church: where its true and original intention was probably to ascribe to the Creator the glory of the heavenly motions: and the idea might be that of a religious dance, in those words of the Psalm, *Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad*: the other parts of the creation being called upon to signify their adoration by their own proper motions; as the

*sea to roar, the trees to wave, the floods to clap their hands.*

The figures by which the constellations and signs are distinguished in the heavens, are mostly symbols of such high antiquity, that we are not able to trace them up to their original. The accounts given of them by the Greeks and Romans deserve no regard; being childish and ridiculous. In many of these the meaning is easy, because they speak for themselves. The *Bears*, inhabitants of the arctic regions, have possession of the northern pole. The *Ram*, *Bull*, and *Lion*, all sacred to the solar light and fire, are accommodated to the degrees of the sun's power as it increases in the summer months. The *Crab*, which walks sideways and backwards, is placed where the sun moves parallel to the equator, and begins in that sign to recede towards the south. The *Scales* are placed at the autumnal *equinox*, where the light and darkness are equally balanced: the *Capricorn*, or wild mountain-goat, is placed at the tropical point from whence the sun begins to climb upwards toward the north. The *ear of corn* in the hand of *Virgo* marks the season of harvest. The precession of the equinoctial points has now removed the figures and the stars they belong to out of their proper



places; but such was their meaning when they were in them.

Royalty and government were from the earliest times distinguished by symbolical insignia. A kingdom was always supposed to be attended with *power* and *glory*. The glory of empire was signified by a crown with points resembling rays of light, and adorned with orbs, as the heaven is studded with stars.— Sometimes it was signified by horns, which are a natural crown to animals; as we see in the figure of Alexander upon some ancient coins. The power of empire was denoted by a rod or sceptre. A rod was given to Moses for the exercising of a miraculous power; whence was derived the magical wand of enchanters; and he is figured with horns to denote the glory which attended him when he came down from the presence of God. In the *Iliad* of *Homer*, the priest of *Apollo*, who comes to the Greeks to ransom his captive daughter, is distinguished by a *sceptre* in his hand and a *crown* upon his head; which is called *σφαιρα* *Σουα*, the crown of the God, because the glory of the priest was supposed to be derived from the deity he represented. So long as monarchy prevailed, the sceptre of kings was a single rod; but when *Brutus* first formed a republic

come, he changed the regal sceptre into a bundle of rods, or faggot of sticks, with an ax in the middle, to signify that the power in this case was not derived from heaven, but from the multitude of the people, as peers in empire; who were accordingly flattered with *majesty* from that time forward; till monarchy returned, and then they were as extravagant the other way,

“ Divisum imperium cum Jove Cæsar habet.”

Virgil plainly understands the *bundle of rods* as the ensign of *popular* power, by opposing to it the majesty of monarchy.

—Non populi fasces, non pupura Regum.

GEORG. II. 495.

The metaphysical objects of the mind, such as the virtues, the vices, the properties and qualities of things, were represented of old with great ingenuity for moral instruction. We have a good specimen of this kind in the emblematical figure of *Time*, which, for any thing we know, may be almost as ancient as time itself. He was figured by the artists of Greece as an old man running on tiptoes, with wings at his feet, a razor, or a scythe, in his right hand, a lock of hair on his forehead, and his head bald behind: of all which par-

particulars the signification is too well known to need a comment. *Justice* with her sword and scales; *Fortune* with her feet upon a rolling sphere, and her eyes hood-winked; *Vengeance* with her whip; *Envy* with her snakes; *Pleasure* with her enchanted cup; *Hope* with her anchor; *Death* with his dart and hour-glass; and innumerable others of the same class, show what delight men have always taken in painting their ideas after various ways under the images of visible forms, to give substance and force to their thoughts: and painters are but indifferently furnished for their profession without a competent knowledge of these things. The poetical figure called *prosopopiæa*, or *personification*, from whence all these devices are borrowed, is no where so frequently used, nor with so much sublimity, as in the holy scripture: of which the learned author *De Sacra Poesi* has selected many fine examples.

The enigmatical method of Pythagoras is well known; who was so fond of teaching by signs, that he made use of the letter Y to signify the two different roads of vice and virtue, to one of which young men give the preference, when the age of trial brings them to the point where the way of life divides itself into these two. Certain moral precepts are preserved

which are called the symbols of Pythagoras.\* He advises *not to keep animals with crooked claws*; by which he means, that we should not take into our houses and make companions of persons who are fierce and cruel in their nature; such as another author calls *θηρία ανθρωπομορφα*, *wild beasts in the shape of men*.

The law of the Hebrews appointed the purity of their diet as a pattern and admonition to purity of conversation: after the example of which (for *Pythagoras* was a *Syrian*) he bids us *στοιμαίνωσθαι ἀπὸ χειρᾶς*, to abstain from all such as die of themselves. He orders, *not to stop upon a journey to cut wood*; that is, not to turn aside after things impertinent to the end and purpose of our life. Also, never to make any *libation* to the gods from *a vine which has not been pruned*: meaning, that no offering would be acceptable but from the fruits of a severe and well-ordered life. He pronounced it a base action *to wipe away sweat with a sword*; that is, to take away by force and violence what another hath earned by his labour. The literal sense of which symbol will not be understood, but by those who know that the an-

\* These symbols are printed with Hierocles on the Golden Verses, and are commented upon by Gyraldus.

cients used a flat instrument like the blade of a knife, with the edge of which they wiped away sweat from the skin, and cleared it of the water, &c. after the use of the bath. It was another of his sayings, that it is a foolish action *to read a poem to a beast*, to communicate what is excellent to a stupid ignorant person: which is the same for sense with that figurative prohibition in the gospel, *not to give a holy thing to a dog*, nor to *cast pearls before swine*. To these symbols of Pythagoras the hieroglyphic philosophy of Egypt was nearly related, which Pierius hath taken great pains to interpret: and also the Fables of Æsop, which teach prudence and wisdom, and show the colours of vice and virtue, from the instincts of animals.

Sacraments and ceremonies in religion are significant actions which all nations and all ages have observed in their worship; and the church still retains them: though these latter times (and this unhappy country in particular) have produced a spurious race of Christians, who have thrown off sacraments and ceremonies all together; as if they had consulted with some evil spirit of a beggarly taste. Priests and singers in our church wear a white linen garment as a sign of purity, and to give them a

nearer alliance to the company of heaven. Chanting by responses, which is of the first ages, was intended to imitate the choir of angels, which *cry one to another* with alternate adoration. The primitive Christians turned towards the east in their worship, to signify their respect to the true light of the world.— They set up candles in their churches as a sign of their illumination by the gospel: and evergreens are still placed there at Christmas, to remind us that a new and perpetual spring of immortality is restored to us, even in the middle of winter, by the coming of Jesus Christ. The *Cross*, as a *sign* of the Christian profession, hath been in use from the first ages of the gospel.

This affection to symbols in religious worship may be carried too far, and degenerate into theatrical scenery or even into idolatry, (for idols are no other than symbols :) but to cast them all off, and strip religious worship naked, is an act of fanatical ignorance, which understands neither the sense of ceremonies, nor the nature of man ; whose mind, in its present state, must either raise itself by the help of sensible objects and bodily gestures, or be in danger of sinking into sullenness and stupidity.

Thus have the use of symbols extended to all

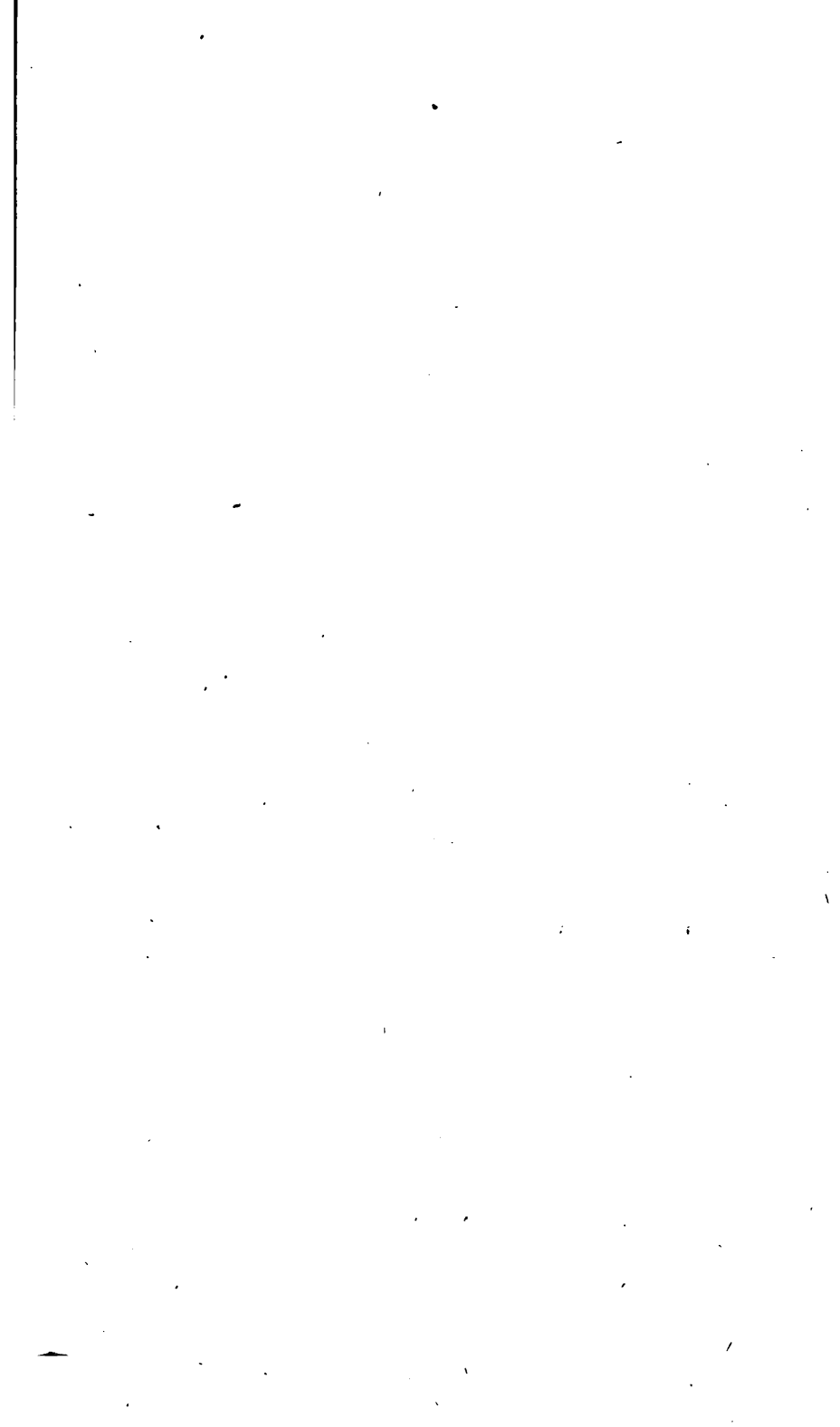
times, and wisdom hath been communicated in this form by the teachers of every science and profession. We might wonder if it were not so ; when God, from the beginning of the world, taught man after this form ; setting life and death before him under the symbols of two trees ; and it is both an ingenious and a sublime sentiment in a certain author, that the whole scenery of paradise was disposed into an hieroglyphical school for the instruction of the first man ; and that the same plan, so far as it could be, was afterwards transferred to the tabernacle and temple.

## END OF THE LECTURES

*On the Figurative Language of the Holy Scriptures.*

**FOUR LECTURES**  
ON THE  
**EPISTLE OF ST. PAUL**  
TO THE  
**HEBREWS ;**  
SHOWING,  
THE HARMONY BETWEEN THE  
**MYSTERIES, DOCTRINES, AND MORALITY,**  
OF THE  
**OLD AND NEW TESTAMENT.**





# LECTURE I.

ON THE CHARACTER AND OFFICES OF THE SON OF  
GOD AS THEY ARE SET FORTH IN THE EPISTLE TO  
THE HEBREWS.

WE read, in the 24th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel, that as two of his disciples were walking to Emmaus, on the day of Christ's resurrection, an unknown person joined them on the way, and entered into discourse with them. After some questions had passed between them, this unknown person (who was no other than Jesus himself) began to show them, how all the circumstances, so lately fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth, had been foreshown in the scripture : and, *beginning at Moses and all the prophets, he expounded unto them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself.* Who can read this without wishing to have overheard that *expository* discourse, which, as the disciples said of it afterwards, made their *hearts burn within them* ? Such a discourse is the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, to those whose hearts are open to understand it ; not conceived in the same words, perhaps, nor laid down exactly in the same method ; but consisting of the same matter, and all tending to produce the same effect.

All the doctrine contained in this Epistle relates to one or other of these three heads :

*First*, to the *Person* of the *Son of God*, as it had been described in the Old Testament.

*Secondly*, to the *Religion* of the *Gospel*, as being the same under both Testaments.

*Thirdly*, to the *Church* of Israel, as a figure of the Church of Christ.

Under the *first* of these heads, I shall extract and arrange the doctrine of the Old Testament relating to the person of the Son of God ; taking the Epistle to the Hebrews as my authority : wherein the Apostle begins with showing the divine character of the Son of God, as distinct from, and superior to, the nature of *Angels* ; those invisible and exalted beings, who are between the nature of men and the nature of God.

For, first, his name is greater than theirs ; it being said to him, never to them, *Thou art my Son, this day I have begotten thee*.\* And, secondly, he is an object of worship to angels ;—when he bringeth in his first begotten into the world, he saith,† *and let all the angels of God worship him*. And farther, he is celebrated in the Psalms as the King of heaven, and the Creator of the world ;—*Thy throne, O God, is*

\* Chap. i. 5.

† Chap. vi.

*for ever and ever.—Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth, &c.* these things are said, as the Apostle witnesses, *to the Son*; who being also commanded to *sit at the right hand of God*, which was never said to any angel, his person was not of a created angelic nature, as the Hebrews might suppose, who had been used to that term in Moses and the prophets, (and perhaps took it generally in such a sense,) but strictly divine, and himself the Lord and God of men and angels, the co-assessor of the Father in glory everlasting.

Such indeed is the character of the Son in the Hebrew scriptures, that it is the same in all respects with those titles which the Apostle subjoins to his name in the second verse of the first chapter: *whom* (saith he) *God hath appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds, who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.* Great as these expressions are, they are the same in substance with what the Old Testament had declared before concerning the Son of God; who being called the *Glory of God*, has that relation to him which the light that comes down from heaven has to the sun, from

- whence it proceeds : who being truly the Son is consequently the heir of God ; who now sustains that world of which he at first laid the foundations ; who purged the sins of man *by himself*, who was the Creator of man ; and when he sat down at the right hand of God, returned to that majesty which was essential to his character before the world was made.

Nothing can be more full and express than the language the Apostle uses in this chapter, to convince the Hebrews, that the term *Son of God*, as applied to the person of Christ, is not a name of accommodation, as sometimes taken in other applications of it, but a name, the excellence of which comes to him, not by adoption, but *by inheritance*, that is, by a natural right, which could not be, unless the Son were of the same nature with the Father.

As the Apostle proceeds to treat of the person of Christ, he takes occasion to show from the 8th Psalm, (and thereby teaches us how to understand that Psalm,) that he, who, as God, was above all the angels of heaven, as man was made *lower than the angels*, that he might taste of death for every man, and so *bring many sons unto glory*, by receiving glory in our nature, as the reward of his sufferings. In virtue of his incarnation, we are become the sons of God and brethren of Christ ; as he was in all things made like unto his brethren,

his brethren will in all things be made like unto him ; that is, they will be imputed by a new relation to the same Father, with a legal right to the same inheritance, and be crowned with glory and honour after their suffering upon earth.

The divine and human natures of the Son of God being thus settled and distinguished, we are now to consider him, with the Apostle, under the three characters he took upon him for the salvation of the world.

1. As Moses, he was to be a *teacher*, *law-giver*, and *prophet* ; and Moses had acted as a minister of God *for a testimony of these things which were to be spoken after* \* by a greater than Moses.

2. Like *Aaron* and *Melchizedec* he was to be a high-priest and intercessor ; a minister of the true sanctuary.

3. As *Joshua*, whose name is called *Jesus* in this Epistle, he was to be the *captain of our salvation*, to conquer our spiritual enemies, and put us into possession of the heavenly Canaan.

From all these figurative characters of the old law, it was foreshewn, that he should be the greatest of prophets, the greatest of priests, and the greatest of conquerors. And first, he is to be understood as a prophet or teacher.

*The Apostle and high-priest of our profession,*

\* Chap. iii. 5.

*Christ Jesus, was faithful to him that appointed him, as also Moses was faithful in all his house :\** to which the Apostle adds, that he was thus faithful *for a testimony* ; his ministry was prophetic, and bore witness in all the principal circumstances of it to the greater ministry of Christ, who was counted worthy of more glory than Moses, because he was the master and builder of that house, in which Moses was no more than a servant. The fidelity of Moses, under all the various trials of his ministry, is the circumstance here selected by the Apostle, and chiefly insisted on ; but there was scarcely a circumstance attending his whole character which did not afford some *testimony* to the ministry of Christ. The general character of both is the same, in that they were *prophets* ; and as the one is said to be *mighty in word and deed*,† so is the other. The *deeds* of Moses were great beyond those of any other prophet, Christ excepted. We see him working wonders among a proud and obstinate people, whose hearts were hardened against him ; as Christ wrought his miracles among the blinded Jews, who never believed on him at last : and as Egypt was at length fearfully judged by the hand of Moses, so were the Jews cast out and destroyed in a terrible manner, when the time

\* Chap. iii. 1.

† Compare Acts vii. 22. with Luke xxiv. 19.

of vengeance came upon them, which Christ had threatened. As Moses left Pharaoh in wrath, never to see his face any more; so Christ left the Jews at their own desire, never more to meet with them but in judgment, when Jerusalem should be overthrown.

In their *words* they were so far alike, that both were lawgivers, delivering to the people the precepts which were received from heaven. All the faithful of the Israelitish church were disciples of Moses, and did as he had commanded them; as the faithful of the latter days are followers of Christ, and observers of his laws.

But most remarkable was the *fidelity* of both these teachers, in persisting on the part of God, in opposition to the powers of this world, and the malice of their own people. *When Moses was come to years, he refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season.\** As the one rejected the pleasures of Pharaoh's court, so the other withstood the solicitations of the ambitious Jews, refusing to be made a king, and rejecting all the kingdoms of the world when they were offered to him. Each of them exposed themselves to reproach and hatred, for maintaining the authority of God, and act-

\* Chap. xi. 24.



ing in his name. This is pointed out to us in many remarkable observations of the first martyr St. *Stephen* in his apology against the Jews. *This*, says he, *is that Moses whom our fathers would not obey, but thrust him from them.* When he first offered himself to his own people as a deliverer, they received him not, but affronted him with that insolent question, *Who made thee a ruler and a judge?* When he pleaded the cause of God, all the congregation murmured at him, as the Jews hated Christ for his exhortations to obedience: corrupt scribes, pharisees, and chief priests, rose up against him, as Moses was opposed and railed at by a self-sanctified party, headed by *Corah, Dathan,* and *Abiram.* The opposition, therefore, that was raised against Jesus Christ, and all the affronts put upon him, though they might make him seem little in the eyes of the Jews, brought his character to a conformity with that of their first lawgiver, and, to their eternal confusion, demonstrated the truth of his mission. And thus argues the first martyr, pressing the Jews with the inference,—*This Moses, whom they refused, saying, who made thee a ruler and a judge, the same did God send to be a ruler and a deliverer.* Persecuted as he was and despised, God sent him and supported him: and they who have persecuted Christ, have only fulfilled what the scriptures foreshowed by the

things which had happened to Moses, the first faithful minister of God to the children of Abraham. The church which was brought out of Egypt, was under his economy in the wilderness, to be directed in the way, and to be fed and supported as occasion required.—The people of God are still travelling through a wilderness, with the second Moses to lead and support them under all the wants, temptations and dangers of their earthly pilgrimage. By this faithful guide will the house of God be governed and protected, till the office of Moses shall be superseded by that of Joshua, and he shall put them in possession of the good land which they have now in prospect.

The second capacity in which this Epistle sets before us the Son of God, is that of *our great high-priest*, signified to us under the figures of the law by the two characters of *Melchizedec* and *Aaron*.

It pleased God from the beginning of the world, as soon as the fall had given occasion to such a dispensation, to *take from among men* some person properly appointed, to make intercession for the rest ; and thereby to keep up the expectation of a divine intercessor, who should make an atonement once for all by a sufficient and eternal sacrifice. The first eminent example the scripture gives us of such a

person, is in the character of Melchizedec, who, as *priest of the most high God, met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him.\** His priesthood was prior to that of the Mosaic law, and greater, because, as the Apostle argued, Abraham shewed its superiority, by offering to this priest the *tenth* of the spoils, and taking his *blessing*. From Abraham the Levitical priesthood descended ; and the children being inferior to the father, and the father inferior to this high-priest, it follows that the priesthood of the law was inferior to the priesthood of Melchizedec. From him Abraham received *bread and wine* ; and the *oath* of God being the great sanction of the priesthood which administers this sacrament, it is thence evident, that the priesthood of the Gospel, which Christ began, and continued and perpetuated, with its offering of bread and wine, is the only true priesthood ; earlier than the priesthood of the law in time, and superior to it in dignity. Thus *after the similitude of Melchizedec, there ariseth another priest, who is made, not after the law of carnal commandment, but after the power of an endless life.* For it appears by the Apostle's reasoning, that this Melchizedec was no human person ; inasmuch as he had no human de-

\* Chap. vii. 1.

scent, and it is essential to this order, that its priesthood should be *unchangeable*\* and eternal. Whence it must follow, that no mere man could ever be capable of the conditions of such a priesthood. There never could be more than one priest of the order; and that priest is Christ himself; who, before *the days of his flesh*, exhibited to the Father of the faithful that effectual priesthood, which should save the world; and made him a partaker of its benefits. All this doctrine the Apostle has drawn out of the short account in the book of Genesis concerning the person of Melchizedec, and the oath spoken of in the 110th Psalm relating to his priesthood.

In the person of Aáron, and the priesthood of the law, we have another standing memorial of the priesthood of Christ, which taught the people under a figure, that the true priest should do, once for all, what Aaron and his successors did year by year. The law had a *shadow of the good things* that were *to come* by the Gospel; and all its ceremonies and services were accommodated to show the necessity and the effects of a better priesthood with better sacrifices. For, first, the tabernacle itself was a pattern of an heavenly original:

\* The Greek means such a priesthood as doth not pass from one person to another; so that there can be but one person of that order.

the directions given to Moses for the constructing of it imply that it was no more than a copy ; and thus argues the Apostle. *The priests, says he, that offer gifts and sacrifices serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things ; as Moses was admonished of God, (or, according to the Greek, as Moses was divinely informed, of God,) when he was about to make the tabernacle ; For, see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern shewed to thee in the mount.* The heavenly substance of which this tabernacle was the shadow and pattern is now exhibited to us under the Gospel ; and we may trace the lines of the *true tabernacle* if we attend to the form of that which represented it. The first part of the tabernacle, in which the daily ministrations were performed, was a figure of this world, in which temporary and mortal priests perform the services of God.—Beyond the vail there was another tabernacle call the *holiest of all*, or as the Hebrew speaks, the *Holy of Holies*. This sacred place was open only to the high-priest, who entered into it with the blood of the yearly sacrifice. When Christ, by his death, which rent the vail of the temple, had opened a way into the heavenly sanctuary, then was the truth of this yearly service accomplished, and he passed from officiating as a priest upon earth, to appear with the merits of his blood for us in heaven, before

the presence of God. And thus the Apostle explains it; *Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.* In which words it is plainly implied, that he did truly, once for all, what Aaron the high-priest did every year; therefore what Aaron did foreshowed what he should do; and if so, the person of Aaron was a figure of his person. That it was no more than a figure for the time then present, and that Aaron was not the true intercessor, which the people of God were taught to expect, was evident from the repetition of his sacrifices year by year; which shewed, that of themselves they were ineffectual: every succeeding yearly offering and atonement showed the inefficacy of what had gone before. Supposing they had answered the end of propitiation, the Apostle puts the question, *Would they not then have ceased to be offered? because that the worshippers once purged should have had no more conscience of sins,\** that is, they might have pleaded in the sight of God the effect of what had passed, if it had been effectual; but it was repeated continually; therefore it was not effectual; it was only *descriptive* or exhibitory of that sacrifice, which, in the fulness of time, should be effectual to the put-

\* Chap. x. 2.

ting away of sin. And this reminds us of the difference between the high-priest of the tabernacle, and the high-priest of the true sanctuary ; that the latter was both priest and sacrifice. And it was necessary he should be so ; for the blood of bulls and of goats could not take away sins : the cattle upon a thousand hills could not make an atonement for one sinner. There is indeed no visible relation, in the eye of human reason, between the death of of a sheep and the pardon of sin : but that Christ, a perfect man, the accepted and beloved Son of God, should shed his blood to save our souls ; in that there is so much sense, that it is the very *wisdom* and *the power of God*.

It has been made a question, by those who question every thing, whether sacrifices were of divine institution. But sacrifices are *descriptive* ; and as the thing described is the redemption of man by the shedding of the blood of Christ, which never could be known but by revelation ; the supposition, that sacrifice could be of human invention, is an absurdity. It is as if we were to imagine, that words could be invented by those, who had no knowledge of things ; or that *signs* could be brought into use without any prior idea of the *things signified*. The knowledge of a redeemer was first given to man ; and the

observation of sacrifice was the expression of that knowledge by a significant act. All mankind were derived from these to whom this knowledge was first given ; and therefore all nations of the world, in all times of the world, did in some form or other retain the observation of sacrifice, for the putting away of sin.

The third character under which the Son of God was foreshown to us under the law, is that of a conqueror. As *Joshua*, whose name is also called *Jesus* in the Epistle to the Hebrews, Christ was to become the *captain of our salvation* ; to subdue our spiritual enemies, and put us into possession of the heavenly Canaan. The person of Joshua, and his acts, and the effects of his commission, are all descriptive of the things to be accomplished by the *true Jesus*. He was the successor of Moses, as the Gospel cometh after the law ; and carried into effect what the law could not accomplish, but only exhibited in prospect ; as Moses died on mount Nebo, with only a distant view of the Holy Land. After the death of Moses, a new generation of people, under the command of Joshua, were conducted to many signal victories, which opened a way to the promised inheritance, that *rest* \* which was to put a period to their wanderings in the wilderness. As the Saviour of the Hebrews, he was honoured

\* Chap. iv. 8.



with that very name which was afterwards given to him, who came *after Moses*, to be the *Saviour of the world*. Joshua knew the excellence of that country to which he was leading the people, and encouraged them to press forward to the enjoyment of it, through all the dangers of which they were afraid. *The land, says he, is an exceeding good land : if the Lord delight in us then he will bring us into this land and give it us, a land which floweth with milk and honey ;—fear ye not the people of the land, for they are bread for us ; their defence is departed from them, and the Lord is with us.* And so it came to pass ; the mighty inhabitants of the land fled before them, and the walls of Jericho fell down flat, after the priests had encompassed it with the ark, and blown with the rams' horns, as they had been commanded. All this was fulfilled at the wonderful propagation of the Gospel under the conduct of Jesus Christ. The powers of the world were all against it ; but the sound of the Gospel from the mouths of the Apostles prevailed against them all. Weak and contemptible as the means might appear which God had appointed, the end was answered. Idolatry was overpowered : Satan was cast out of his strong holds, which he had so long possessed in peace : and the *kingdom of the world became the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ.*

Here it is a wonderful thing to consider, that the Canaanitish nations, who possessed the land promised to the people of God, were all idolaters, or *Gentiles* as they are called, such as the Roman empire and all the kingdoms of the world were before the establishment of Christianity. This circumstance is taken notice of and applied in the apology of St. Stephen against the Jews. *Our fathers*, said he, *had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness,—* which also our fathers that *came after* brought in with *Jesus* into the possession of the *Gentiles*. The tabernacle of God was transferred to the Gentiles, and there established under Joshua ; to signify in a figure, that the church, under Jesus Christ, should be transferred from the Jews to the Gentiles. The first set of people who came out of Egypt, rebelled against Moses, and refused to hear the exhortation of Joshua : so they died in their unbelief, and their carcasses were left in the wilderness. But those who *came after* (as St. Stephen words it) the successors of that disobedient generation, entered with the tabernacle into the possession of the Gentiles ; as the new children of Abraham, who came after the apostate Jews, followed the true Jesus, when his religion was translated into the heathen world.

The time is yet to be expected, when every power of this world and the other shall fall

before him. As those wicked Canaanites were driven out of their land, when the measure of their iniquities was filled up ; so shall the wicked be driven out of the earth, when that vengeance of God shall overtake them, which they have so long held in contempt and defiance. The world itself shall be surrounded by the Son of God, as the Captain of our Salvation, and the army of saints and angels which shall attend upon him at his coming. The *last trumpet* shall sound, and the world shall be overthrown, as Jericho fell flat, when it had been compassed about seven days by the priests and ministers of God. When the priests blew, as they were commanded, at the time appointed, and all the people *shouted with a great shout*, (Josh. vi. 5.) the fortifications of that proud city sunk at once into a heap of ruins. With reference to which history, we are reminded that *the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout*, (1 Thess. iv. 16.) *with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God.*

It pleased the wisdom of God to describe before-hand, in the manner I have now explained to you from the Old Testament, the things relating to the person of the Son of God, as our *Lawgiver*, our *High-priest*, and our *Saviour* ; with the works he was to perform for the redemption of mankind. Wonder not

that they were all so particularly delineated by ceremonies, signs, and miracles. They are so great and important, that had they been written in the firmament of heaven as plainly as they are written in the books of Moses and the Prophets, they would have been worthy of it.

## LECTURE II.

THE RELIGION AND FAITH OF THE PEOPLE OF GOD,  
THE SAME (IN SUBSTANCE) UNDER BOTH TESTA-  
MENTS.

THE nature of man being the same now as from the beginning of the world, and the nature of God being unchangeable; it must follow, that the great object of the dispensations of God to man must be the same in every age; though the form and manner after which that object is pursued may be different: so that what *God spake in former times to the fathers by the prophets* will be found the same in sense and effect with what he *spoke in the last days by his Son*; though he spoke *in divers manners*, as occasion might require *at sundry times*. This is a matter of the utmost consequence; and it is what I propose to show you in the present Lecture; namely, that it was the design of St. Paul, in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, to teach them that the religion of the people of God is, for substance and intention, the same under both Testaments.

This I shall prove from two general reasons, and afterwards from some particular ones.

My first general reason is this ; That religion has the same name under the two dispensations of Moses and of Jesus Christ : it is called *the Gospel* : for the Apostle, speaking of those who were under the teaching of God in the wilderness, says, *unto us was the Gospel preached as well as unto them* ;\* making the religion, delivered to us in the New Testament, but a repetition of what had always been delivered to the Church. The *Gospel* signifies a message from God for the salvation of man ; and as such was delivered at sundry times by Moses and the Prophets. If the word preached did not profit some, *not being with mixed faith in them that heard it*, this is no argument against the sense or sufficiency of the word itself ; it only shows us, that, in all ages of the world, some there have been, and will be, who, being carnally minded, and wholly attached to this world, are destitute of that principle, which the scripture calls by the name of *faith* ; and which, as an universal test to the servants of God, is the same yesterday, to-day and for ever.

What I here say leads me to my second general reason, to prove, That religion is the same under both Testaments ; and this is, that it has the same general characteristic, or mark, by which it is to be distinguished. If we ask,

\* Heb. iv. 2.

what was the religion of the Jews, who received the law from Moses ? The answer is plain ; it was a religion which believed things past, and had faith in things to come, expecting the present favour of God from the observation of certain acts of religious worship, as *seeing him that is invisible*. This principle of faith has been the characteristic of the true religion from the beginning of the world. To Adam the generation of the world was an article of faith ; and the effects of the tree of life and the tree of knowledge were no objects of his sight. After the Fall, the expectation of a Saviour, the *seed of the woman*, who should *bruise the head of the serpent*, was another article of faith ; as was also the curse to be executed upon the earth, which the world in the days of Noah had neglected and forgotten.— There never was a time when true religion did not believe something past, and expect something to come, and conform itself to ordinances, the effects of which were of a spiritual nature ; and it is the trial of man in this life, whether he will observe such ordinances, and depend upon them. Adam's dependence was upon the sacramental Tree of Eden. The Patriarchs and Jews depended on the rights of sacrifices and purifications, imposed on them till the times of reformation ; and we are taught, by the example of Abel, that a sacrifice was ac-

cepted for the *faith* of him that offered it. Christians now depend on the sacraments of Baptism and the Lord's Supper. With regard to the past, they believe that Christ suffered for their sins, and arose from the dead ; and with regard to the future, that he shall come again to judge the world. The religion of the people of God always was, and always will be, a scheme of *faith* and *dependence* : therefore it is an universal doctrine, common to all ages, which a Prophet delivered and an Apostle hath confirmed, that *the just shall live by faith*.\* Let him be as *just* as he will, his *life* is not from his *justice*, but from his *faith* ; without which he hath nothing of that life which true religion gives ; and is dead in the sight of God. To the same effect, our Apostle, speaking of Enoch, that according to the testimony of the scripture, *he pleased God* ;† draws an inference in favour of Enoch's *faith*, because *without faith it is impossible to please him*.‡ This general principle of *faith*, while it reconciles and unites the religion of both Testaments, serves to detect every false religion that has been or can be invented ; because in such there can be no *faith* properly so called ; in as much as it will either have false objects, or none at all.

\* Chap. x. 38.

† Gen. v. 22. and Eccles. xlv. 16.

‡ Chap. xi. 6.



In the religion of the Gentiles, there was a sort of faith, but it was chiefly directed to objects fabulous and false. The *Mythology* (by which I mean the *religious mysteries*) of the Greeks gave them a traditionary account of the world's original ; of its destruction by the flood ; of a future paradise (called *Elysium*) for the virtuous ; and a place of torment (called *Tartarus*) for the punishment of departed souls, after a formal trial and condemnation by the judges of the infernal regions : and they preserved the institution of sacrifice ; thereby confessing their dependence on invisible powers for the expiation of sin. They also maintained the doctrine of man's natural blindness and impotence without the assistance and inspiration of their deities, for which they never failed to invoke them in their compositions and great undertakings. Modern times have been refining upon the reformation, till by degrees they have conceived and brought forth a sort of philosophical religion, distinct from every thing the world had seen before ; because it is *a religion without faith*. The scheme of our *Deists*, as they call themselves, has nothing in it of things past ; no fact or tradition to ground itself upon : it has no sacraments, nor services of any kind, to keep up an intercourse with heaven ; it expects no predicted judgment, and has no particular view of any thing

after this life. Thus having no objects of faith, it teaches no dependence, which alone renders the most just man acceptable to God. It actually inculcates *independence*, and glories in it : it has neither church, nor sacraments, nor religious worship, nor allegiance, nor submission to God or man ; and, therefore, it comes more nearly up to the wishes of the Devil, the great author and first father of independence, than any religion ever professed in the world before. If dependence upon God be the characteristic of a religious man, then it must be better to believe the labours of *Hercules*, the future judgment of *Rhadamanthus*, and to do sacrifice to *Jupiter*, than to be of this persuasion ; because the worst religion, professed in natural ignorance and sincerity, must be preferable to that proud and incorrigible ignorance, which wilfully rejects all the religion in the world.

From the two general reasons I have now given you, it appears, that the Law and the Gospel are the same religion under different forms : for they have the same *name*, and are distinguished by the same *character* ; that is, by the great principle of *faith*, which is essential to both. To these two general reasons, I shall now subjoin as many particular ones as are necessary, from the Epistle under our consideration ; in all of which it is required of me

to show, that as the *principle* of faith is common to both Testaments, so the *articles* of faith were in general the same.

1. We have seen already, that the Son of God had been revealed to the Hebrews, as the Creator of the world, and sitting at the right hand of God, in certain passages, of which the worst of the Jews did not dispute the application; and with all this, that he should yet be *partaker of flesh and blood*,\* and in all things *made like unto his brethren*; as Moses had before declared in the law; *The Lord thy God will raise up unto thee a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me.*†—So particular is this prophecy, that it is twice given in the book of *Deuteronomy*, and twice reasoned from in the *Acts of the Apostles*, first by St. *Peter*, and afterwards by St. *Stephen*, in their discourses to the Jews.‡

2. The necessity of mediation with God on behalf of man was signified by the priesthood of the law; to teach the people, that prayer could not be heard, nor sin pardoned, without a *priest* to *intercede*, and *blood* to *expiate*. But then, that this was only a figurative priesthood, a figurative intercession, a figurative atonement, serving for a time to describe what should come after, and supersede the descriptive services of

\* Chap. ii. 14.

† Deut. xviii. 15, 18.

‡ Acts iii. 22. and vii. 37.

the law ; the Apostle here proves from the Old Testament itself, where a Prophet pronounces them insufficient : *in burnt-offerings and sacrifices for sin thou hast had no pleasure.*—Then said he, lo, *I come to do thy will, O God. He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second ;\** that is, he taketh away the services of the law, that he may bring in Christ to do the will of God. *In the volume of the book it had been written* of him ; for the book of the law spoke this language in every part of it, that Christ should come to do the will of God for our sanctification.

3. The law showed, moreover, how this should be effected : for it was *dedicated with blood*, and its precepts and promises were called a *Testament*, that is, a *Will*, such as is made and witnessed among men for the conveying and settling an inheritance in a lawful way. Hence it followed, that no service could be accepted without the offering of blood ; and that the *death* of the *testator* should intervene, before the promises of God could descend to his children. So argues the Apostle :† *for this cause he is the mediator of the New Testament ; that by means of death, for the redemption of the transgressions that were under the first Testament, (and could not be purged away by the blood of animals,) they which are called might*

\* Chap. x. 8, 9.

† Chap. ix. 15.

*receive the promise of eternal inheritance. For where a testament is, there must also of necessity be the death of the testator. For a testament is of force after men are dead,—whereupon, neither the first Testament was dedicated without blood.*

4. It was also foretold, that there should be *a new covenant* ;\* not such as was made with the fathers when they were brought out of Egypt, which covenant was confined to a particular people ; but such as should comprehend all nations, when the spirit of the divine law should be written in the hearts of men, and all should know the Lord from the least to the greatest. But the old and the new were both contained in the covenant God made with Abraham in the times before the law. In regard to his natural posterity it was said, *Unto thy seed have I given this land from the river of Egypt unto the great river, the river Euphrates* : this is a temporal promise : but to the same Abraham it was said, *In thy seed shall all the nations of the earth be blessed* : this is a spiritual promise, and is the same in all respects with the Christian covenant.

5. With regard to temporal things, the servants of God in all ages were instructed to look upon the world, and they actually did look upon it, as we do (or should do) now. Upon

\* Chap. viii. 8, &c.

a principle of faith in God's promise, they who were called out of Egypt under Moses, set out upon a progress toward a land which they had never seen, and knew only by report; with many difficulties and terrors to encounter by the way; so that the history of their journey is an instructive picture of all the trials and dangers of the Christian life: and when they were settled in the land of promise, their business there was not to give themselves up to the enjoyment of the world, but to *serve God* in holiness and righteousness, and still to depend upon him for their support and defence against their enemies. The greatest favourites of heaven, who had the best title to inherit the earth, considered this life only as *pilgrimage* toward a better. Abraham *sojourned in the land of promise as in a strange country*, where he was not at home, and *dwelt in tabernacles*, to signify that he had no fixed habitation upon earth, but *looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God*. Jacob underwent a series of disappointments and sorrows; and toward the close of his life confessed that his *days had been few and evil*.\* Moses preferred the *reproach of Christ* to the *treasures of Egypt*; and the saints and prophets, who came after him, were ready on all occasions to renounce the world in the spirit of martyrdom;

\* See Chap. xi.

they suffered all the contempt and persecution the world could inflict upon them for the trial of their faith, and *ran with patience the race that was set before them*, choosing death itself through the hope of a *better resurrection*: whence the saints of the law are celebrated and set forth as examples of faith and patience to the saints of the gospel. How unaccountable, therefore, has been the error of some modern divines, such as these days of refinement have produced, who have contended that the law gave no notice of a future life, and that the Jews were taught to look for nothing under it but temporal rewards: a doctrine so false in itself, so injurious to the word of God, and so contrary to the preaching of Christ and his Apostles, that it is condemned in the Articles of the Church of England; the seventh of which affirms, as it ought to do, and as we have sufficiently proved already, that "The Old Testament is not contrary to the New; for both in the Old and New Testament everlasting life is offered to mankind by Christ, who is the only Mediator between God and man, being both God and man. Wherefore they are not to be heard, which feign, that the old fathers did look only for transitory promises." To show that they had a better hope, and that their faith was the same as ours, though their worship was of a different form, is the whole

design of the Epistle to the Hebrews, where the Christian doctrines are all deduced from the Old Testament. Our Saviour, in his argument against the Sadducees, Matt. xxii. 31. shows how the doctrine of a resurrection was taught in that declaration of God to Moses, "*I am the God of Abraham,*" &c. and the argument extends to the whole Old Testament ; for if God, as the God of Abraham, was the *God of the living*, and Abraham still lives expecting the resurrection of the just ; then the like declaration, wherever it occurs, must yield the same doctrine ; for that God should be *the God of the dead*, is no more consistent with his honour in one part of the scripture than in another. The covenant of God is a covenant of *life* ; and the argument is of equal force whether the relation is applied to those who are in the world or to those who are out of it. This life, considered in itself, is no better than death ; (*vestra hæc, quæ dicitur vita, mors est ;*) so that if God, when he called himself the *God of the Hebrews*, was the God of those who had only hope in this life, (as a modern divine asserted for a project,) then he was the God of the dead ; and so the name *God of the Hebrews* would have been a dishonourable title, of which, as the Apostle observes, Heb. xi. 16. God would have been *ashamed*, as a title no better



than that of a mortal king, whose power and promises extend to this life only.

6. All this is further evident, in that the law promised a *Rest* or *Sabbath* which it never gave ; and therefore, the promise looked forward to that other glorious Sabbath which is to be fulfilled in another life. The Apostle, in explaining the scripture on this subject, shows us how the fulfilling of this promise was suspended. That the faithful had a Sabbath of Rest in prospect after the course of their labours, appears from that threatening sentence in the law, which it denied to those who did not believe. " For," saith the Apostle, " we which have believed do enter into Rest, as he said, as I have sworn in my wrath if they shall enter into my Rest : although the works were finished from the foundation of the world."\* Now the question is, what the *Rest* here spoken of can mean ? It cannot mean that Rest which immediately followed the six days of the creation, when *God did rest on the seventh day from all his works* ; for that Rest of God had been past and gone from the foundation of the world, when the works of God were finished. We must therefore look for another : and in this inquiry, it may occur, that the Rest to be expected was in the land of Canaan ; because those who

\* Chap. iv. 3.

were precluded from it fell in the wilderness ; according to what is said,\*—" With whom was he grieved forty years ? Was it not with them that had sinned, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness ? And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his Rest, but to them that believed not ?" Hence, I say, it might be imagined, that the settlement of the people of Canaan was the Rest with which God was to reward them. But neither can this be the case ; because in the Prophet David, many ages afterwards, he limiteth the promise of this rest to a certain day ; saying, " To-day, after so long a time ; to-day if ye will hear his voice, harden not your hearts.† For if Jesus," as the Apostle argues, (that is, if *Joshua*, who is also called *Jesus*,) " had given them Rest (in Canaan) then would he not afterwards have spoken of another day. There remaineth therefore a Rest to the people of God : " that is, in other words, according to the drift of the argument, the Rest proposed to the people of God always meant what it means now ; and that which *remains* to us at this day, *after so long a time*, is the same that was promised to the faithful of old. Consider the application of the term, and you will see that the Apostle's reasoning must be true ; for it is called the

\* Chap. iii. 17, 18. See Numb. xiv. 30. and Deut. xii. 9.

† Chap. iii. 7, 8.

*Rest of God*;—if they shall enter into *My Rest*;—and what was that? It was undoubtedly a Rest in Heaven, after the works of the creation were finished upon earth: “He that is entered into his *rest*, he also hath ceased from his own works, as God did from his:” therefore it is a Rest, into which no man can enter, till his *works* upon the earth are *finished*.—To those who understand the language of the law, and the Apostle’s reasoning upon it, this is a demonstration that the law did not rest in temporal promises. They who lived in faith under the patriarchal dispensation, died in the same faith; death could make no change in their creed, because they expected of God what they could never receive, till their works upon earth were finished. Therefore, it is truly said of them; *these all died in faith, not having received the promises; but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.\** The land of Canaan was not the object of their hope: it was only a sign and a pledge of the goodness of God, an earnest of what they were to expect after this life; therefore they desired *a better country, that is an heavenly*, and their mortal life was a *pilgrimage* in quest of it. There never was an age, in which it was not required

\* Chap. xi. 13, &c.

of the children of God, that they should renounce the world, and prepare themselves by that discipline which should fit them for a better state. Such is the language of the scripture to them all, under the several names of Patriarchs, Jews, or Christians ;—*My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of him ; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth.\**

7. What I proposed to consider in this Lecture hath been sufficiently proved ; namely, That the religion of the people of God was the same for substance under the Old as under the New Testament ; so that, in fact, we find but one true religion from the beginning of the world to the end of it ; a religion of *faith* and *dependence upon God*, for his *protection* here, and his *rewards* hereafter.

The Apostle having taught us throughout the Epistle that the spiritual things of the gospel, called the *good things to come*, were described as a body is by its shadow, under the priesthood and services of the law ; and that outward forms of worship were ordained to keep up an inward principle of faith in the promises of God ; sums up his whole doctrine, by showing us how faith operated, and what

\* Chap. xii. 3.

effects it produced in good men from the beginning of the world ; in order to demonstrate, by their examples, that true religion always was what it now is ; that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever* ;\* that the faith and patience of the Gospel were nothing new ; that the whole revelation of the Old and New Testament is one consistent scheme for the salvation of man ; and consequently, that Christianity is indeed, as some in mockery have advanced, as *old as the creation*. This is the design of the 11th chapter, which begins with a definition of faith, as *the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen*. It is the substance of things hoped for, because nothing can be the object of our hope till it has first had been the object of our faith. It is the evidence of things not seen, because they are capable of no other : the ear is the witness of sounds, and the eye is the witness of visible objects ; but faith alone is the faculty which discerns invisible things, and receives them on the word of God : and if men do not with this faculty admit and embrace them, we shall not succeed by reasoning with them. Spiritual things must be received by a spiritual sense, which sense is called *faith*, and the scripture tells us, that *all men have not faith* ; and where

\* Chap. xiii. 8.

it is not, all the reasoning upon earth will not produce it ; therefore let no man be so vain as to think, that his arguments will persuade those whom God hath not persuaded.

After his description of faith, the Apostle proceeds to show how it operated in the saints : first, in *Abel*, who offered a *bloody sacrifice* for the remission of sins ; while Cain brought only of the *fruits of the earth*, not signifying his faith in the remission of sin by the shedding of innocent blood. Enoch is said to have *walked with God* ; which no man can do but by faith, because God is invisible : therefore he *walked by faith and not by sight*. Noah believed that the flood would come upon the earth, when as yet there were no signs of it ; and that his house might be saved, when the world should be drowned by the preparing of an ark. Abraham gave himself up to God's direction, and went out in search of a land he had never seen, and did not so much as know the name of it. He laid Isaac upon the altar to be slain, though he had no other son to inherit the promises ; whence his faith concluded, they would be secured by his son's resurrection. Joseph, when he was dying, commanded that his bones should be carried into Canaan ; in faith that the whole nation would follow them ; and that the promises

would be fulfilled to him after his death.— Moses gave up his project of preferment at court ; knowing that the ministry of God and the *reproach of Christ* would be attended with a better *recompence*. The fear of God, whom he did not see, had more weight with him than the wrath of Pharoah who was present to him.

By these and many other like examples, it is proved, that nothing great or acceptable to God was ever done, but only from a sight of things invisible, and the expectation of what is to come after death. It was this faith which subdued and cast out the kingdoms of Canaan, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, and turned to flight the armies of the aliens.

There are no motives to the observation of a Christian life more striking than those which are drawn from the facts of the law. These the Apostle hath set before us abundantly in the Epistle to the Hebrews, as I may show you hereafter. In the mean while, the moral of the whole doctrine hitherto delivered, is *to look*, as they did who went before us, *unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith* ; that seeing him to be the beginning

of our strength, and the end of our hope, we may follow him, through the dangers of life and the terrors of death, to *that rest which remaineth for the people of God.*



## LECTURE III.

ON THE CHURCH, AS A SPIRITUAL SOCIETY WHICH IS  
THE SAME THING AT ALL TIMES.

OUR inquiry into the faith of the ancient fathers showed us, that there never was more than one true religion in the world : we shall now discover, that there never has been more than one true *religious society*, called *the Church* : and this I shall endeavour to prove,

*First*, by considering the *nature* of the Church as a society.

*Secondly*, by considering the *form* of it.

The Church, in its *nature*, always was what it now is, a society comprehending the *souls* as well as the *bodies* of men ; and therefore, consisting of two parts, the one spiritual, answering to the soul, the other outward, answering to the body. Hence some have written much upon a *visible* Church and an *invisible*, as if they were two things ; but they are more properly one, as the soul and body make a single person.

In the 12th chapter of the Epistle to the

Hebrews, the Apostle gives such a description of that society, into which Christians are admitted, as will show us the nature of it. "Ye are come, says he, unto Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and Church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect; and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaketh better things than that of Abel."\* The terms here used give us a true prospect of the Church; let us take them in their order. By *Mount Sion*, we are not to understand the *place*, but the *thing signified*, the *heavenly society* of God and his saints; the same which David in spirit calls the *Hill of the Lord*,† whereto the King of Glory was to ascend; and the *Holy Hill of Sion*, spoken of in the 2d Psalm, on which the Son was to be placed, after the vain opposition he should meet with from the Kings and Rulers of the earth. This is that *Zion of the Holy One of Israel*, to which the forces of the Gentiles were to flow from all parts of the world, as the Prophet Isaiah describes it;‡ which pro-

\* Chap. xii. 22, &amp;c.

† Psalm xxiv.

‡ Chap. lx.

phesy was not fulfilled in the literal Sion where the Jews lived.

This society is also called the *City of the living God*, distinguished from the cities of the world, as Jerusalem was from the cities of the heathens : who dedicated their cities not to the living God, but to the names of their dead idols ; such as were *Beth-Shemesh*, *Beth-Peor*, and others of that sort. This being then the city of the living God, must be an immortal society ; for the *living God* does not preside over *dead citizens* ; he is *not the God of the dead, but the God of the living*, and all the members of this society *live unto him*. This is the city, said to *have foundations, whose builder and maker is God* : to this the holy Patriarchs looked, as the object of their hope, knowing, that they were even then *of it*, and should never be out of it, because the *citizens of God never die*. It is therefore called the *heavenly Jerusalem*, because it is of an heavenly nature : and it is called *the Jerusalem which is above, which is free, and is the mother of us all* :\* it is free in its nature, and cannot be brought into bondage by the persecuting powers of this world ; and its members are free, because they are spiritual ; and spirits cannot be bound. It is the *mother of us all* : even of all the families of the earth

\* Gal. iv. 26.

that are admitted into it ; it gives the new birth to people of all countries ; it knows no distinction of Jews or Christians, and its *citizens* may live at Athens, Rome, or Antioch.

Its spiritual nature is farther declared, in that it is said to comprehend an *innumerable company of angels* : the whole family of heaven is included in it. The Apostle calls it the *general assembly*, because it takes its members from all times and all places : other assemblies are partial, composed of the citizens of one city, or the people of one nation. It is the *Church of the first-born written in heaven*, because its members, being entitled to the privilege of *inheritance*, are therefore called *first-born*, to whom the right of inheritance belongs. This is also spoken with reference to that custom of the law, according to which all the first-born were to be *sanctified unto the Lord* ; and Moses was commanded to register them all, and take the *number of their names* ;\* with reference to which, the sons of the spiritual society are said to have their *names written in heaven*, where they are registered in the *book of life*. The word *Church* explains nothing to us in English, but in the Greek it signifies the company of those who are *called out* of the world to be the servants and citi-

\* Numb. iii. 40.

zens of God. Other societies have their proper judges and rulers ; but here, God is the *judge of all*; his law is the rule of judgment, and he rewards and punishes without fear or favour. In the communion of the Church the *spirits of just men made perfect* are also included. It is a society, which admits only the spirits of the living, and as such cannot exclude the spirits of the dead : and this confirms what we said above, that the Church is a spiritual community, comprehending the dead as well as the living : for the best interpretation supposes these to be the spirits of the Martyrs, who had finished their earthly course, and were *made perfect through sufferings*, after the example of their Saviour.

The Christian Church is here described by the *old names*, to show that it was *no new thing*, but the same holy mount of God, the same heavenly city of God, to which the spiritual part of his people always belonged : and they knew they did so, because the living God must be the head of a living society. They who were ignorant of its true nature, disputed about the *place* where the Church ought to be : the Samaritans contended that it was to be on their *mountain* ; the Jews said it was to be only at *Jerusalem* : but, as a society of spirits, it is no where and every where : the *true*

*worshippers of God are they who worship him in spirit and in truth;\** wherever these are, there is that *Jerusalem, which is the mother of us all,*

The Church being a society of a spiritual kind, is therefore called by the same names in all ages; Christians are said to be come unto *Mount Sion*, and Moses is said to have been with the *Church* in the wilderness. The reasonableness of which will be farther evident, if we consider the nature of its vocation: it is separated from the pollutions of the world, and called unto holiness of life. *Ye shall be holy unto me*, said the Lord; *for I the Lord am holy, and have severed you from other people, that ye should be mine.*† For this end the Hebrews were placed in a land by themselves, that they might not be corrupted with the ways of the Gentiles. They had laws and customs of their own, all tending to secure them from the idolatrous worship and wicked manners of the heathens. We Christians, who now belong to the Church, are in like manner called out of the world. Our blessed Saviour, speaking of the vocation of his disciples, saith, *They are not of the world, even as I am not of the world.*‡

But it is now to be shewn, *secondly*, That as

\* John iv. 23.

† Lev. xx. 26.

‡ John xvii. 16.

the Church of God hath always been the same in its *nature*, it hath likewise preserved the same *form* in its external economy; the wisdom of God having so ordained, that the Christian Church under the Gospel should not depart from the model of the Church under the law. For as the congregation of Israel was divided into *twelve tribes*, under the twelve Patriarchs, so is the Church of Christ founded on the *twelve Apostles*, who raised to themselves a spiritual seed among all the nations of the world. They all had an equal right to use the style of St. Paul; who speaks of his converts, as of his *children*, *begotten* by him to a new life, through the preaching of the Gospel: so that he and all the other Apostles are to be considered as the patriarchal progenitors of the whole Christian people.

In the new Church we have twelve Apostles, in the old, twelve Patriarchs; but in the heavenly society, where both are united, we find *four-and-twenty Elders*, seated about the throne of God, as it was shown in the spirit to St. John. There the saints of all ages look to the Lamb that was slain for the salvation of all. By some he was expected; by others he is commemorated: to those he was the end of the law; to these the beginning of the Gospel; but to the general assembly of them all, he is the object of their faith and hope, and the principle of

all true religion from the beginning of the world to the end of it; the Redeemer of all times, the Saviour of all nations. We have reason to believe, that the Church, even in its glorious and triumphant state, shall still be conformed to its primitive division: for Christ assured his Apostles, that when the Son of man should sit upon the throne of his glory, they also should *sit upon twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*\*

Our Saviour, in choosing the number of those whom he appointed to minister in his Church, was pleased to observe a strict conformity to the number of rulers under the law. Besides his *twelve* Apostles, he appointed other *seventy* also: the number *seventy* agrees to that of the *Elders*, who were appointed to assist Moses in his ministry.†

A farther examination will teach us, That the priesthood of the Gospel was formed very exactly upon that of the law. Aaron was appointed as an high-priest for the service of the tabernacle; under whom the sons of Aaron constituted an inferior order of priests, divided afterwards under David and Solomon into four-and-twenty courses, all regularly officiating in their turns. Below these there was the order of the Levites, who assisted the priests in all the services of the temple.—

\* Matth. xix. 28.

† See Numb. xi. 16, 25.



There were then three orders of priests in the Jewish Church : there was the high-priest, and the sons of Aaron, and the Levites.— In the Church of Christ there was the order of the *Apostles* ; besides whom there were the *seventy disciples* sent out after them ; and last of all, the *Deacons* were ordained, to serve under both in the lower offices of the Church. The same form is still preserved in every regular Church of the world, which derives its succession and authority from the Church of the Apostles ; after whom the *Bishops* succeeded by their appointment ; such as *Timothy* and *Titus* were in their respective Churches. This authority has been opposed in the Christian as it was in the Jewish Church : Corah and his company rose up against Moses and Aaron, for usurping a lordly authority over the people : so, in the later ages of the Christian Church, a levelling principle hath prevailed, which has appeared in many different shapes. In some it objects to the order of *Bishops*, as an *usurpation* of long standing in the Church : in others, it argues for an equality of authority in all Christians, because *all the congregation are holy* ; herein making no distinction between holiness of *person* and holiness of *office*.

Thus hath the authority of the Church been troubled with arguments and objections, the

same as in the times of old, and proceeding from the same spirit of rebellious opposition, under the disguise of superior sanctity. It was foretold to the Church by the Apostle, that of *their own selves men should arise, speaking perverse things to draw away disciples after them,\** as Corah and his company rose out of the congregation itself, and drew the people after them. Unless it were so, the Church of Christ would not be conformed, as it ought to be, to the Church of Israel. Though the case is lamentable, yet thus it must be : *it must be that offences come* : the authority of the priesthood must be opposed, and the Church must be divided, if the scriptures are verified ; *but woe unto them by whom the offence cometh.*

The Church under the Gospel hath also been provided for as it was under the law, by the *tenths* of all the fruits of the earth, set apart for the maintenance of its ministers. The antiquity of this provision is so great that we cannot trace it up to its beginning. Abraham gave the *tenths of the spoils* to *Melchizedec*, long before the age of Moses ; and therefore the law only established what had been instituted in the earliest times of the Patriarchs. The Christian Church followed the same rule in all countries, as soon it obtained a regular establishment ; and the Apostle argues for the

\* Acts xx. 30.

propriety of it from the law of Moses. "Do ye not know," said he, "that they which minister about holy things, live of the things of the temple? and they which wait at the altar are partakers with the altar? Even so hath the Lord ordained, that they which preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel."\* Here it is evidently intended, that the practice of the law should be taken as a precedent for the times of the Gospel; and that as it was then, *even so* it ought to be now: but the clergy then received the tenths, &c. which were consecrated by God's appointment; therefore it is his ordinance that they should receive the same now; otherwise the cases would not be parallel.

During the persecutions under which the Christian Church suffered as its first appearance, its support by pecuniary contribution, and the sale of private property, may seem to have authorized a new rule, different from that of the law of Moses. But we can draw no conclusion, because of the necessity of that time. In regular times the old rule will take place: and if the Church should again fall into distress, it must again depend upon the devotions of the congregation.

There is likewise a conformity in all the services and ministrations of the Church. The

\* 1 Cor. ix. 13.

law had its washings and purifications, as we have the purification of water baptism. They had the passover in figure, as we have it in truth ; for *Christ our passover is sacrificed for us* ; and we *keep that feast* as a memorial of *our redemption*, as they commemorated their deliverance from Egypt by the offering of the Paschal Lamb. He was no Jew who did not celebrate the Passover ; and he is no Christian who neglects the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. As they had *manna in the wilderness* to support them, we have the *true bread from heaven* ; without which we cannot pass through the wilderness of this world to the heavenly Canaan. They added their prayers to the *incense* of the temple, as we offer up our prayers through the merits of Christ, whereby they are recommended and made acceptable. There was a censer for incense within the veil, as Christ intercedes for us in the presence of God. *Let my prayer*, says the Psalmist, *be set forth in thy sight as the incense* ; thereby showing us what was intended in that part of their service : and when Zechariah, the father of John the Baptist, offered incense in the temple, there came a voice from heaven which assured him that his *prayers were heard*. As these things have been considered more at large in the 4th and 5th Lectures on the *Figurative Language of the Scripture*, it may suffice to observe, that

as Jesus Christ is called the *minister of the true tabernacle*, all the services of the old tabernacle are verified under his priesthood ; so that not one jot or tittle of the law is found to fail.

The Church has also been remarkably conformable to itself in its sufferings. There never was a time, so far as we can learn, when the true Church of God, with its doctrines and institutions was not hated and opposed by the world ; either persecuted or oppressed by powerful tyrants, or traduced and insulted by lying historians. From Abel downwards, a restless worldly spirit of unbelief has contradicted the worship of the true God, and troubled his people. The Hebrews were held in abomination by the Egyptians, and treated as slaves ; though the nation had been saved from famine, and its policy reformed and established under an Hebrew. They plotted to extirpate the whole race of them, by casting every man-child into the river. When the Church was settled in Canaan, all the neighbouring nations of idolaters were as thorns in their sides, detesting their religion, and fighting against them at every opportunity. The Chaldeans led them into captivity, and detained them for seventy years, with a view to make them forget their religion ; the practice of which they also endeavoured to render im-

possible by the demolition of their temple.—Antiochus murdered the Maccabees, and harassed the whole people on account of their faith.

The same spirit, acting on the same principle, afflicted the Christian church with ten bloody persecutions ; and there never was a time when it was not misrepresented by lying reports and malicious accusations. Truth and godliness have always been distinguished by the world's ill-will towards them ; and if there be any particular Church now, which is hated and railed at more than the rest, by Papists on one side and the Sectaries on the other, I will venture to announce from this circumstance only, that wherever that Church can be found, it will prove to be, in its *doctrine* and *profession*, the purest Church of Christ upon earth.

The authority and discipline of the Church (which are the last things I shall speak of) have been the same in all ages, by God's appointment ; as being founded on two reasons which are of perpetual obligation. The Church having the charge of the divine oracles, and being the guardian of the divine law, must have authority to preserve it, by punishing those who offend against it ; and being a society, or body corporate, must always have had (what is common to all lawful societies) a right

of preserving itself by a power over its own members.

The authority of office in the Church always was and now is, from God himself: no man can *take the honour* of the priesthood, but *he that is called of God, as was Aaron*: and the person so invested is accountable to God for the exercise of his authority, and not to the world; because the object in view is the preservation of God's law, for the salvation of his people. Therefore, *every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense of reward*;\* and, *he that despised Moses' law died, without mercy, under two or three witnesses*.† The same power (*mutatis mutandis*) was with the Christian Church; and they are commanded by the Apostle to watch over their members, and *look diligently, lest any man fail of the grace of God; lest any root of bitterness springing up, trouble them, and thereby may be defiled*.‡ No society can long survive, when its discipline is lost; because the manners of men, when unrestrained, tend universally to dissolution.—The Church has undoubtedly, as it always had, a divine right to preserve the faith, to punish its own members by censures, deprivations, and excommunications; and exercise

\* Heb. ii. 2.

† Chap. x. 28.

‡ Chap. xii. 15.

such discipline as is necessary to prevent the gates of hell from prevailing against it.

When we consider the degeneracy of the times, and the corruption of all orders of people ; the insolence of offenders, and the weakness of authority ; it should not make us fretful and disobedient ; it should only dispose us to pray for that blessed day, when the Church of Christ shall be restored to its purity against the corruptions, and to its authority against the encroachments, of the world ; when he, who drove the buyers and sellers out of his temple, shall again purge his Church of those that disgrace and defile it ; when they who have despised and oppressed it, as if it had been made for them to trample upon, shall themselves lick the dust with their teeth broken.

I have taken much pains to explain the matter of this Epistle to the Hebrews, because it connects the Old and New Testament, and gives light to both. It rectifies many mistakes of superficial Christians, who suppose that Christianity was a new thing when it was preached by the Apostles, because Christ was then newly come in the flesh ; whereas it was only the perfection of that doctrine, and that Church which had subsisted from the beginning of the world. Hence also we learn the



infinite importance of the sacraments and institutions of the Church, of which many Christians in these days have a poor low understanding. The confusion which followed upon the Reformation brought many to a deplorable state of ignorance ; out of which they cannot be recovered, but by following that admonition of the Prophet ;—*Thus saith the Lord, stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the old paths, where is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls.\**

\* Jer. vi. 16.

## LECTURE IV.

THE MORAL OF THE CHRISTIAN DOCTRINES, AS STATED  
IN THE EPISTLE TO THE HEBREWS.

THIS Epistle doth not only shew us the harmony of the Old and New Testament, and explain the great doctrine of faith with all the depth of divine learning; but gives us the best precepts, and the weightiest reasons, for a godly and Christian life; which all who study this part of the scripture should lay up in their hearts; that they may be *doers of the word, and not hearers only*. These precepts and reasons I shall therefore collect and enforce to your consideration, as they occur to us in the course of the Epistle.

The Apostle, having described the dignity of the Son of God, thus argues; that if he was so great, how important must that way of salvation be, which he preached to the world? How necessary must it be for us to attend to it? and how dreadful will the consequences be if we do not? If the law of Moses, published by inferior ministers, was so strictly enforced, and every offence against the honour of it so severely punished; *how shall we escape if we neglect the great salvation pub-*

lished by Jesus Christ? This is the purport of his reasoning ; and now let us consider the weight of it. If God descends from heaven to teach, there must be some great reason for his coming, which will render those exceedingly guilty who do not hear him. Therefore it must be our duty to listen to his words, and study his doctrine, that we may understand it, and receive the benefit of it for the salvation of our souls. We may put this off as a matter of no consequence, and escape for the present. The man who tells us of these things out of a pulpit, has no power to punish us ; but nevertheless God will not be neglected : he who vindicated his law, shall vindicate his Gospel ; and then what will become of us ? what shall we say for ourselves in that dreadful day, when the reasonings and reserves of every heart shall be exposed and confuted ? If the question is demanded of us, how it came to pass, that we were so ignorant of the Gospel, and so inattentive to its instruction ; shall we answer, that we were too busy ? What greater business can any man find in this vain world, than to provide for the saving of his soul ? If his business could bring the whole world into his possession, what good would that do him ? The man that had the whole world for his own, would probably be the greatest fool in it ; and care or pleasure

would soon destroy him. Yet they who can get but a very small part of the world, and must soon lose even that, make their business an excuse, and have no time to bestow upon their everlasting interest.

The importance of the salvation spoken of in the text is farther shown, by the manner in which it was recommended to the world. It was attested by signs and wonders and divers miracles, and gifts of the Holy Ghost; all intended to raise the attention of mankind, and convince them that they must be lost if they neglected to hear what was so powerfully recommended. Add to all this, the amiable, as well as the excellent, character of its great Preacher; whose life was spent in teaching; whose only business in the world was to save those, many of whom are too busy to hear him. He condescended to the ignorance of the poor; was compassionate to sinners; argued patiently with the perverse and obstinate; and accommodated himself to the wants of all. At last he tasted death for every man; for you that hear, and for me that speak; and by his exaltation after his sufferings hath showed us the encouragement we have, and the reward we shall receive, if we follow his example. Nothing but hardness of heart can hinder us from partaking of the benefits of our heavenly calling; as it hindered the

people in the wilderness from reaching the promised land. We are therefore to *take heed*, as the Apostle forewarns us, *lest there be in any of us an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God*. This Egypt, this wicked world, in which we live, must not withdraw our affections, and put us out of humour with the manner and the way of trial, by which God shall be pleased to carry us forward in our progress through this wilderness. And we are to exhort one another against the *deceitfulness of sin*.\* We can see how grossly the disobedient Israelites were *deceived*, in preferring Egypt to Canaan; and we wonder at them, that they should be so perverse and brutish: let us then not be cheated as they were. How did it happen that they were beguiled of their inheritance? They did *not believe* the promises of God; and if we are deceived, it must be for the same reason. The Rest of Canaan was better than the bondage of Egypt; and the service of God is better to us now than the bondage of sin; which can only interrupt the happiness of the servants of God, and fill them with disappointment and bitterness. Miserable is the situation of a Christian who does not look forward, and press forward, to the promised Rest. He has left Egypt; and there is no better entertain-

\* Heb. iii. 13.

ment in this wilderness, than the hope of getting well out of it. But if, instead of this, he is only looking back and wishing for the world which he has renounced; he is that *double-minded man*, who is *unstable in all his ways*; neither a man of the world, nor a Christian; neither easy with God, nor without him.—There cannot be a more unprofitable and unhappy character. It is said of the Israelites in the wilderness, that their *heart was not whole* with God, neither continued they stedfast in his covenant. How many fall under the same censure! they give a portion of their heart to God; and another much greater to the world.

When the Apostle is entering upon the more mysterious parts of this Epistle, he upbraids the Hebrews with their unskilfulness in the word of God. They contented themselves with the first elements of Christian instruction, and neglected the mysteries of the scriptures; living, as children do, upon *milk*, with little appetite and strength to admit more solid nourishment.\* Some think they are learned enough, if they never get beyond their catechism: some never get so far. And it is common to plead in excuse, that, little as their knowledge is, they know more good than they do, and have already more learning than they practise: not considering that the scripture

\* See Chap. v. 12, 13.

abounds with many great and excellent mysteries, which have nothing practical in them, but so far only as they elevate the mind, and, by bringing our affections nearer to God, dispose us to do his will with more love and cheerfulness ; and consequently to do more of it, and to better effect : which is a matter of infinite importance, and now too little attended to. The Christian must be progressive ; he must *go on* from the beginning of knowledge to the *perfection*\* of it. He ought to know more of God every day ; otherwise he may think of him less, till he totally forgets him : and then he is in danger of falling into that state, out of which men cannot be renewed unto repentance. When the Gospel, which a man had received, has not power to lead him forward, there is no new Gospel to awaken him ; when the most powerful medicine God ever made hath lost its effect ; what other can we apply ?

So long as the soul is in a growing state, the blessing of heaven continues with it, and the grace of God brings it on to farther improvement : but if it is out of culture, thorns and briers get possession of it, and its end is to be burned. When thorns and briers shall be planted in Paradise, then such careless Christians may expect to be admitted into heaven.

\* Chap. vi. 1.

From the consideration of Christ's Priesthood, we are exhorted to *draw near with faith*, and partake of his blessing, by attending upon his Church and his ordinances; not *forsaking the assembling ourselves together as the manner of some is*.\* The Jews, I fear, in the worst of times, were more zealous in attending their public services and sacrifices, than some of those who call themselves Christians. In the best days of the church, it was always the manner of some few to absent themselves from the religious assemblies of the Christians: but what would *St. Paul* have said, if he had lived to these times, when perhaps not one half of the people are at the public prayers; not one quarter of them at the sacrament? And they have no persecution to fear, as the primitive Christians had; who attended their worship at the hazard of their lives. It must be owing to mere idleness and indifference; for however business may be pleaded on the ordinary days of the week, it cannot be pleaded on a Sunday. This truth I must suppose them to know; that if their Saviour is a *Priest*, they must partake of the *sacrifice* he offers for their salvation. But there is another dreadful truth, which they do not think of; that, to those, who do not partake of this sacrifice for sin, there remaineth *no other*; but a certain *fearful looking*

\* Chap. x. 22, &c.



*for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries. If he who despised Moses' law died without mercy, of how much sorer punishment shall they be thought worthy who do this despite to the spirit of grace,\** by neglecting the great atonement that was made by Christ himself for the sins of the world? *It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God,†* and be made an example of divine vengeance: and what else can they expect, who refuse to accept of the sacrifice of Christ, by which alone the *fiery indignation* of God can be turned away from their own persons? No words are sufficient to express their danger: O that they could see it themselves, and would consider of it, and not trust to such frivolous excuses as will stand them in no stead in the day of visitation.

To encourage us in our Christian warfare, the Apostle sets before us at large the examples of the Saints of old, who were all saved by leading a life of faith:‡ enduring every trial, and conquering every enemy, on this great principle. There never was any other way of salvation from the beginning of the world, but this way of faith. All the Saints of God who found acceptance with him, depended

\* Chap. x. 26, &c. † Chap. x. 31.

‡ See Chap. xi. of this Epistle.

upon his word and promise for such things as they could not see ; and either forsook the pleasures of the world, or contradicted its errors, and endured its reproaches, for his sake. We may plead the business of life, and the cares of life ; but they had their business and their cares as well as we ; yet they loved God, and made it their first care to be saved. The race we are to run may have its difficulties : indeed, if it is a *race*, it cannot be without them : but we are *encompassed with a cloud of witnesses*,\* all testifying that this *RACE* may be run, and the prize obtained ; because they did actually perform it, and are entitled to the crown of victory. What hinders us from doing the same ; but that we are retarded by some *weight*, which we are not careful to divest ourselves of and *lay aside* ? We do not strive against that sin, whatever it may be, which most easily besets us, and is never to be subdued but by faith and prayer, and self-denial ; faith in better things than this world can bestow ; and prayer for that grace which may assist us in doing what our strength will never accomplish.

Great is the influence which the example of God's faithful servants will have upon our minds, if we meditate upon it. They were men of like passions with ourselves, and were

\* Chap. xii. 1.

not without their weaknesses: Sin put on the same deceitful appearance to them as to us: and they had the scorn of an overbearing world to resist, as we have now. Their example, while it instructs, will animate and encourage us. But greater than all is the example of our blessed Saviour himself: therefore we are directed to *look unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is set down at the right hand of God.\** What are the troubles we are accustomed to, compared with the agonies of the cross? What is the contempt of silly empty people, who call themselves the world, compared with the disgrace of hanging naked as a malefactor before a multitude, who mocked at the punishment as a proof that he who suffered it was an impostor? Nothing was ever so full of apparent disgrace, as the character of Jesus Christ at his passion. How distressing, and almost distracting is it, to be innocent, and yet seem to be guilty? This is a piercing trial to an honest mind: To affect to be great when we are mean, and powerful when we are weak, exposes us to the scorn of every enemy; and this the enemies of Christ laid to his charge, and gratified themselves with every malicious expression that could add

\* Chap. xii. 2.

to the apparent infamy of his sufferings. Yet all this shame he patiently endured, *for the joy that was set before him.* This we are to consider under all our trials. God does not lay upon us any grief or chastening, for its own sake ; but to correct our minds, and give us a title to that joy, which shall be the reward of patient suffering. Thus we shall not be weary and faint in our minds. I grant it is a severe trial to mortal man, to deserve good and receive evil : but to this we are all called, as the followers of a crucified Saviour. The Son of God was made *perfect through sufferings* ; and if God is our Father, we must expect that he will chasten us ; if he does not, then are we *bastards and not sons.*\* Bastards are often forsaken by their parents, and left to grow up without correction ; consequently to be brought by the tendency of their unreformed nature to misery and destruction : but no Christian would wish for such a privilege : he judges it far better to suffer in hope, than to be at his ease, as one whom God hath neglected.

From the description given of the Church as a spiritual society, the Christian is to learn the dignity of his own character, and to conduct himself in a manner suitable to his station. He seems outwardly like other men ;

\* Chap. xii. 8.

but inwardly he has an honourable place in the kingdom of spirits: he is in the company of angels, saints, and martyrs; he is under the dominion of God as his king and lawgiver; he is a student of wisdom in the school that has sent out so many sons unto glory; he is within the covenant that is sealed by the blood of Christ for his purification and redemption; his name is registered in heaven, as an heir of immortality: he knows that while the mighty empires of the earth are changing and passing away into oblivion, the *kingdom* of which he is a member shall *never be moved*.\* *The earth shall be shaken*, and the *heavens* shall melt away; but his inheritance is secure. The same *God* who is a *consuming fire* to an impenitent world, will be to him a Protector and a Saviour, if he *serves* him *acceptably*, in this short time of his probation, *with reverence and godly fear*.

The last chapter of the Epistle consists wholly of exhortations, relating to the great duties of charity, purity, submission, and a detachment from the world.

All parties of men are bound together by a common interest; which, though in some cases even wicked and absurd, and little better than a conspiracy, will have its effect in disposing them to espouse the cause, and pre-

\* Chap. xi. 28.

fer the company and conversation of one another. Now, as there is no common interest so important as that of Christians, it ought to produce such a friendship as is superior to every other relation or connection. *Remember them that are in bonds*, says the Apostle, *as bound with them*; that is, as considering that they are members of the body of Christ, and that one member cannot suffer without affecting the rest. The same rule is applicable to every other condition of life; as if it had been said; Remember them that are *poor*, as partaking of their poverty; remember them that are *sick*, as being sick with them: for thence we shall feel the same obligation to relieve *them* as to relieve *ourselves*; and much greater comfort, because *it is more blessed to give than to receive*.

Purity of life is another virtue essential to the Christian character. We are to consider ourselves as brought into that heavenly society, wherein are angels, saints, and martyrs: then, how shocking will it be to reflect, that an impure Christian is impure in the company of Angels; drunk, and like a beast, in the company of Angels; covetous, ambitious, self-interested, and deceitful, in the company of Angels. Hence you will understand, how a wicked Christian is worse than a wicked Heathen, and will have a more severe account to give; because he adds affront and insult to his

wickedness ; so that it shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for him.

From the consideration, that true religion has always had the same object from the beginning of the world, namely, that of bringing men to God by the way of faith and patience ; and that *Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever ; yesterday*, under the Law ; *to-day* under the Gospel ; and *for ever* in the kingdom of Glory : we should learn to be stedfast in this ancient plan, and look with a suspicious eye upon all pretended reformations and improvements of modern Christians, who are inventing new modes of faith, and would show us what they call a more excellent way. Vanity is always fond of novelty : you see it every day in the common change of fashions : and therefore vain men are carried about with every wind of doctrine, propagated by those who are ignorant of the antiquity of that religion, by which all believers have been and are now to be saved. If men did but study the scripture on a right principle, without a spirit of party, and inquired duly into primitive Christianity, they would be ashamed of the little mean differences and distinctions which divide their hearts, and break them into sects ; filling them with a Pharasaical pride against one another ; as if the *end of the*

*commandment* were *not charity*, but hatred, contempt, and ill-will.

To prevent this, the Apostle instructs the Hebrews to *obey them that have the rule over them*, their lawful Pastors and Teachers, whom Christ hath appointed to keep them in the way of peace; and whose studies and labours must qualify them to inform and direct the ignorant better than they can direct themselves. An abuse of the principles of the Reformation, which can never be sufficiently lamented, has at length made every man his own teacher, and established a spirit of self-exultation and opposition, than which no temper is more hateful to God, because none is so destructive of piety and peace. Christians should leave that to the sons of the earth, who are disputing for power, places, and pre-eminence; with whom gain is godliness because they have no God but Mammon and Belial, no views nor hopes beyond the present life.

This leads me back to the great source of all moral instruction, on which the Apostle hath so frequently insisted, and with which I shall conclude; I mean the necessity of a detachment from the world in all those who would be followers of Jesus-Christ. Our Master was one who came to disown the world, and to be disowned by it: he came to his own, and was not received by them; he was



hated for his truth, reviled for his works of goodness and mercy, and at his death was led out of the city of Jerusalem to *suffer without the gate*,\* as one disowned, and cast out, and delivered over to the world of the Gentiles ; all of which was foreshown by the great yearly sacrifice, whose blood was first offered in the Tabernacle, and then it was carried out to be *burned without the camp*. On this the Apostle raises an affecting exhortation, that we ought to *go out after him bearing his reproach* ; even the reproach of being despised and disowned and *cast out* by the world, as he was. Every Christian, though he is neither with the camp, nor with the city of Jerusalem, has some attachment which he is called upon to leave, and to be despised for so doing ; he must go out either from the wisdom of the world, or the fashion of the world, or the party and the interests of worldly people ; as Christ went out of the gate of Jerusalem, and as Abraham forsook his family and friends, to obey the calling of God. The unbelieving Jews looked with contempt on those who left them to follow a crucified Master, whom they had led out of their city as a malefactor, and delivered to the Gentiles ; and the world will cast reproach upon all those who forsake its opinions and customs. But, as the Jews themselves were soon after-

\* Chap. xiii. 12.

wards driven out from their city, and their whole economy was dissolved; so shall the world itself be destroyed, and its inhabitants shall be turned out from the place in which they trusted. When this shall happen, they have no other place in reserve; but we shall find that city, that *continuing city*, which we have so long looked after, *whose builder and maker is God.*

END OF LECTURES ON THE HEBREWS.



**A LECTURE**  
ON THE  
*NATURAL EVIDENCES*  
OF  
**CHRISTIANITY;**  
DELIVERED AS  
**A SERMON**  
ON  
**MR. FAIRCHILD'S FOUNDATION,**  
AT THE CHURCH OF  
*ST. LEONARD, SHOREDITCH,*  
On TUESDAY in WHITSUN WEEK, 1787.



# A LECTURE,

&c.

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THE wisdom of God in the natural creation is a proper subject of the Lecture delivered in this place upon this occasion: but as the knowledge of the scriptures is not excluded, I may be permitted to bring them both together into one discourse: for they illustrate one another in a wonderful manner: and he who can understand God as the fountain of truth, and the Saviour of men, in the holy scripture, will be better disposed to understand and adore him as the fountain of power and goodness in the natural creation.

To those who search for it, and have pleasure in receiving it, there is a striking alliance between the economy of Nature, and the principles of Divine Revelation; and unless we study both together, we shall be liable to mistake things now, as the unbelieving Sadducees did, in their vain reasonings with our blessed Saviour. *They erred, not knowing the scriptures, nor the power of God:* they neither understood them separately, nor knew how to compare them together.

Men eminently learned, and worthy of all commendation, have excelled in demonstrating the wisdom of God from the works of Nature ; but in this one respect they seem to have been deficient ; in that they have but rarely turned their arguments to the particular advantage of the Christian Revelation, by bringing the volume of Nature in aid to the volume of the Scripture ; as the times now call upon us to do : for we have been threatened, in very indecent and insolent language of late years, with the superior reasonings and forces of natural philosophy ; as if our late researches into Nature had put some new weapons into the hands of Infidelity, which the friends of the Christian Religion will be unable to stand against. One writer in particular, who is the most extravagant in his philosophical flights, seems to have persuaded himself, and would persuade us, that little more is required to overthrow the whole faith and economy of the Church of England, than a philosophical apparatus ; and that every prelate and priest among us hath reason to tremble at the sight. This is not the voice of piety or learning, but of vapouring vanity and delusion. Neither a *Bacon*, nor a *Boyle*, nor a *Newton*, would ever have descended to such language, so contrary to their good manners and religious sentiments : the first of whom hath wisely observed,

that the works of God minister a singular help and preservative against unbelief and error: our Saviour, as he saith, having laid before us two books or volumes to study; first the *scriptures*, revealing the *will* of God, and then the *creatures*, expressing his *power*; whereof the *latter* is a *key unto the former*.\* Such was the piety and penetration of this great man. However, let us not take it amiss, that at certain times, we are rudely attacked and insulted. Christians, under the temptations of ease and security, would forget themselves, and go to sleep: they are therefore obliged to their adversaries for disturbing them, that they may awake, like *Samson*, and discover their own strength. So little reason have we in fact to be terrified with the threatenings of our adversaries, that we invite them to enter with us upon a comparison between the word and the works of God. For it will be found true, as I shall endeavour to show, that *the invisible things of God*, that is, the things concerning his Being and his Power, and the economy of his spiritual kingdom, which are the objects of our faith, are *clearly seen from the creation of the world*, and *understood by the things that are made*.

Having much matter to propose, I must not indulge myself in the use of any superfluous

\* See Bacon's Advancement of Learning, Book 1.



ous words. A plain and unadorned discourse will be accepted rather for the meaning than the form : and as I am about to consider the works of God in a new capacity, I must bespeak your attention, not without a degree of your candour also, to excuse an adventurous excursion into an unfrequented path of divinity.

Let us inquire then, how the religious state of man, and the spiritual kingdom of God, as the scriptures have made them known to us ; that is, how Christianity, as a scheme of doctrine, agrees with the works of God, and the economy of Nature ? In consequence of which it will be found, that the Christian Religion hath the attestation of natural philosophy ; and that every other religion hath it not.

Our Bible teaches us these great principles or doctrines : that man is now in a fallen state of forfeiture under Sin and Death, and suffering the penalties of disobedience : that, as a religious being, he is the scholar of heaven, and must be taught of God : that the Almighty Father of men and angels gives him life and salvation by his word and Spirit ; in other words, by Christ and the Holy Ghost : that there is danger to us from the malignity and power of evil spirits : that a curse hath been inflicted upon the earth by a flood of water : that there is no remission of sin without shedding of blood ; and that a divine life

is supported in us by partaking of the death of Christ in the Paschal or sacramental Feast of the Lord's Table ; that there is a restoration to life after death by a resurrection of the body ; and, lastly, that the world which we inhabit shall be destroyed by fire.

These are the principles, at least the chief of them, which are peculiar to the scriptures. He that believes them is a Christian : and if the works and ways of nature have a correspondence with these principles, and with no other, then ought every natural philosopher to be a Christian believer.

I. Let us proceed then to examine how the case stands. The unbelieving philosopher supposes man to be in the same state of perfection now, as when he came from the hands of his Creator. But the infirmities of his mind, with the diseases and death of his body, proclaim the contrary. When the death of man is from the hand of man, according to the laws of justice, it is an execution : and it is the same in its nature, when inflicted upon all men by the hands of a just God. The moral history of man informs us, that he offended God by eating in sin. His natural history shows us, that, in consequence of it, he now eats in labour and sorrow. The world is full of toil and trouble : and for what end, but

that man may earn his daily bread? The hands of the husbandman are hardened, and his back is bowed down with the cultivation of the earth. Thorns and thistles prevail against him, and multiply his labour. While some are toiling upon the earth, others are doomed to work underneath it. Some are exercised and wasted with works of heat : some, for a livelihood, are exposed to the storms and perils of the sea : and they, who are called to the dangers of war, support their lives at the hazard of losing them.

The woman, who was first in the transgression, is distinguished by sorrows peculiar to her sex : and if some are exempt, they are exceptions which confirm the general law ; and show, that the penalty doth not follow by any necessity of Nature, but is inflicted.

Many are the unavoidable sorrows of life : but if we consider how many more are brought upon man *by himself*, it is plain his *mind* is not right : for if he had his sight and his senses, he would see better, and avoid them.

Suppose human nature to be perfect ; what is the consequence? We not only contradict our own daily experience ; but we supersede the use of Christianity, by denying the existence of those *evils*, for which only it is provided. The whole system of it is offered to us as a cure for the consequences of the fall.

From the accommodation of its graces, gifts, and sacraments, to the wants of our nature, we have a demonstration that our minds are in a distempered and sinful state : as the drugs and instruments in the shop of the surgeon are so many arguments that our bodies are frail and mortal.

II. The scriptures declare farther, that man, thus born in sin and sorrow, would grow up in darkness and ignorance, as to all heavenly things, unless he were taught of God : whose word is therefore said to be a light. The case is the same in nature. For how doth man receive the knowledge of all distant objects ? not by a light within himself, but by a light which comes to him from heaven, and brings to his sight a sense of the objects from which it is reflected. What an uninformed empty being would man become in his bodily state ; how destitute of the knowledge of all remote objects, but for the rays of light which come to him from without ? Such would he be in his religious capacity without the light of revelation, which was therefore sent out into all lands, as the light of the sun is diffused throughout the world : *The people that walked in darkness* (such is the state we are born to) *have seen a great light : they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the*

*light shined.\** The scriptures declare that we are in a state of stupidity and death, till we are illuminated by the Gospel: *Awake thou that sleepest and rise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light.†* But they cannot make our souls worse than our bodies would be without the visible lights of heaven; and therefore in this respect, the physical state of man answers precisely to his religious state; and if we duly observe and reflect upon the one, we must admit the other also, or oppose the testimony of our senses.

III. The gospel informs us, that there is a light of life to the soul of man, and a Divine Spirit of God which quickens and inspires; and that the whole economy of grace is administered to us by the persons of the Son and the Holy Ghost. And are not the principles of man's natural life maintained by a parallel agency in nature? Do we not there also find a light to animate, and a spirit to inspire and give us breath? The Divine Spirit, from his nature and office, takes his name from the air or natural spirit of the world, which supplies us with the breath of life. On the day of Pentecost he descended from heaven under the outward sign of a rushing mighty wind; that from this philosophical emblem we might under-

\* Isaiah ix. 2.

† Eph. v. 14.

stand his nature and operations ; who, like the wind, is invisible, irresistible, the medium of life, and the inspirer of the Prophets and Apostles, who all spake as the *Spirit gave them utterance*. The air is the instrument of speech, and the vehicle of sound. Such was the Divine Spirit to the Apostles ; by whose aid and operation, *their sound went out into all lands*. The ways of the Spirit of God in the birth of man unto grace are hidden from us : we distinguish him only by his effects : so it is in nature ; we hear the sound of the wind, but we cannot tell whence it cometh, nor whither it goeth. Thus did our Saviour himself illustrate the operations of the Holy Ghost from those of the air : and, what is very remarkable, he communicated the Holy Ghost to his disciples under the outward sign of *breathing upon them*.

In the invisible kingdom of God, there is a *sun of righteousness* which rises upon a world that lieth in darkness ; raising up the dead, to a new life, and restoring all that sin and death had destroyed. So doth the visible world present to us the great luminary of the day, whose operations are in all respects like to those of the sun of righteousness. In the morning it prevails over darkness, and in the spring it restores the face of nature.

When the scriptures say that the powers of the word and Spirit of God are necessary to

the souls of men ; they say no more than what the most scrupulous philosophy must admit in regard to their bodies : for certainly mankind cannot subsist without the sun and the air. They must have light, to *live* by as well as to *see* by ; and they must have breath, without which they can neither live, nor speak, nor hear.

We are to argue farther ; that as we must suppose a sun to shine before we can suppose a man to exist upon earth : so, by parity of reason, the Divine light was pre-existent to all those who are saved by it ; and to presume that Jesus Christ, who is that light, is only a man like ourselves, is as false in divinity, as it would be false in philosophy to report the sun in the heavens as a thing of yesterday, and formed, like ourselves, out of the dust of the ground. Doth not philosophy teach us, that the elementary powers of light and air are in nature supreme and sovereign ? For, is there any thing above them ? Is there a sun above the sun that rules the day ; and is there a spirit above the wind that gives us breath ? Therefore, so are the persons of Christ and the Holy Ghost supreme and divine in the invisible kingdom of God. If not, it must lead us into idolatry and blasphemy, when we see them represented to us in the scripture by these sovereign powers in nature. *God is Light,*

and *God is a Spirit*; therefore, that person who is called *the Spirit* must be divine: and Jesus Christ who is *the true Light* must be *the true God*.

Wheresoever we go in divinity, thither will philosophy still follow us as a faithful witness. For if we are assured by revelation, that there is a power of divine justice to execute vengeance on the enemies of God, and which shall destroy with a fearful destruction the ungodly and impenitent whenever it shall reach them: we find in nature the irresistible power of fire, which dissipates and destroys what it acts upon, and which in many instances hath been applied as the instrument of vengeance upon wicked men. Sacrifices were consumed by fire, to signify that wrath from heaven is due to sin, and would fall upon the sinful offerer himself, if the victim did not receive it for him by substitution. When the law was given on Mount Sinai, the heavens flamed with fire, and the mountain burned below, to give the people a sense of the terrors of divine judgment. With allusion to which exhibition, and other examples of the actual effects of his wrath, God is said to be *a consuming fire*: and happy are they who *regard the power* of it, and *flee from it*, as Lot and his family fled from the flames of Sodom.



IV. Another doctrine, peculiar to the scripture, is, the danger to which we are exposed in our religious capacity, from the malignity and power of the Devil; whose works are manifest, though he himself is invisible. But the natural creation bears witness to his existence, and to all his evil properties; where the wisdom of God hath set before us that creature the Serpent, a singular phenomenon of the same kind; whose bite diffuses death so suddenly and miraculously through the body, that he may be said, in comparison of all other creatures, to have the *power of death*. He is double-tongued and insidious; often undiscovered till he has given the fatal wound. In a word, he is such a pattern of the invisible adversary of mankind, who was a liar and a murderer from the beginning, that the hieroglyphical language of the Bible speaks of him in the history of the first temptation under the name of *the Serpent*. The wicked who are related to him as his *seed* or *children*, are called a *generation of vipers*; by which figurative phrase it is literally meant, that they were of *their father the devil*.

In the modern systems and schemes of those who affect the philosophical character, we are not always sure of finding a God: but we are sure never to find a Devil: for as the Heathens

of old offered sacrifices to him without understanding that they did so ; in like manner do some people of these days work under him without knowing him. Yet certainly, the scripture, by its application of the word *Serpent* to the *Tempter* who brought Sin and Death into the world, hath referred us to the natural creation for the properties of the Serpent-kind ; and from those properties every naturalist may learn what the Devil is, and what we have to fear from him, more accurately and effectually than any words can teach. What he finds in the natural Serpent he must apply to another invisible, Serpent, who can think and reason and dispute the veracity of God ; which the common serpent never could. How came so fearful and cursed a creature into the works of God ? Certainly for the wisest end : that men might understand and abhor and avoid the enemy of their salvation. The world was made, as the scriptures were written, for our learning ; and unless the Serpent were found in it, there would be a blank in the creation, and we should have been to seek for some ideas, which are of the last importance to the mind of man.

Other ideas, nearly related, may indeed be collected from the contrariety between light and darkness ; with their figurative alliance to moral good and evil. The power of Satan hath the like effect on men's souls as darkness

**hath upon their bodies ; and the scripture calls it the *power of darkness*. If the enemies of God's religion are called the *seed of the Serpent*, in opposition to the sons of God ; so are they also represented to us as children of darkness, in opposition to the children of light. *What communion, saith St. Paul, hath light with darkness ; what concord hath Christ with Belial, or what part hath he that believeth with an Infidel ?* The ancient Persians, who were given to speculate as Philosophers on the principles of their theology, argued from the course of Nature, that there are two contrary principles of Good and Evil in the world of Spirits : that there is a malignant power acting in opposition to the benign goodness of the Creator, as darkness, in the vicissitudes of day and night, holds divided empire with light. Which speculations, properly corrected, are agreeable to the imagery of the scripture ; in which the author of evil is called the *power of darkness* ; and, in his capacity of a destroyer, is compared to lightning, which, like Lucifer, *falls from heaven* to do mischief upon earth.**

V. Another doctrine of Revelation is the execution of a curse by the waters of a flood ; which obliges us to examine how it agrees with the natural history of the earth. It was impossible to know that this catastrophe was

universal, but by Revelation ; but when known it is confirmed as a fact by the same proofs of it occurring to us in every part of the known world. The curvatures, furrows, and chaniels, on the whole face of the earth, open to common observation, are so many marks and monuments of the forcible effects of descending waters. The relics, fragments, and bones, of marine productions, every where found under the earth, show that the sea covered the land, and that the present world, on which we now live, is the burying-ground of a former, on which that curse was executed, which God pronounced at the beginning. The natural history of the earth, as bearing this testimony to the Flood of Noah, has been very troublesome to our Infidel Philosophers ; and the improbability and weakness of some theories, with the wild extravagance of others, advanced to disguise this plain fact, show that its evidence is stubborn and untractable.

VI. The derivation of a principle of life from the death of Christ, and the remission of sin by the shedding of his innocent blood, are doctrines essential to the gospel, and every way agreeable to the condition of man's natural life ; for we live by the death of innocent animals, who lay down their lives for our sustenance, not for any fault of their own.—Such

creatures as are hurtful and not fit to live, are not fit for us to eat. The act of killing clean beasts in sacrifice, and the sprinkling of their blood, and the feasting upon their flesh, had undoubtedly an intended correspondence with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, and the support of our spiritual life by a participation of his death. The whole institution was prophetic, and the scriptures are copious in the application of it. And though the act of slaughtering innocent creatures is not now a religious act, as it used to be, the *rationale* of it is still the same; and it will speak the same language to the end of the world; it will always be declaratory of the salvation of man by the death of an universal sacrifice. The insensible people who trade in the slaughter of innocent animals, and shed their blood by profession; and they who fed upon them by daily custom, never think of this: but the universal practice of mankind speaks, without their understanding it, that which Caiaphas prophesied without knowing what he said, *It is expedient that one man die, that the whole people perish not.* It is expedient that the innocent should die to feed our bodies: let any man deny it if he can: and it is equally expedient, that Jesus Christ should die to feed our souls.

Well! Well! 2

Some Philosophers of antiquity, ignorant

of the terms man is now upon with his Maker, refined upon the traditional rites of sacrifice and the priesthood, (which are nearly as ancient as the world,) and reasoned themselves into an abhorrence of animal food. They exclaimed against the use of it, as barbarous and unworthy of a rational creature: especially as the lot falls upon the most inoffensive of animals, whose dispositions and services have a claim upon us for kindness and protection. But these are doomed to die by the wise appointment of God, and by these men live; as Jesus Christ the righteous, with the meekness and innocence of the *Lamb*, was *brought to the slaughter*; that through his death we might have life eternal.

VII. The resurrection of the body, which comes next in order, is no where taught but in the scriptures. The apparatus of the Philosopher can furnish no argument against it; and God's apparatus is clearly on the side of it. For if it be examined by the light of Nature, that is, by the light reflected from natural things, it becomes a reasonable, and almost a natural doctrine.

It is evident that man's body was made of the dust of the earth, because we see that it returns into earth again. Philosophy therefore may argue, that as God formed man's

body of the dust at first, he can as easily restore and raise it from the same afterwards. That he will actually do this is promised to us in the scripture; and on that promise Nature is giving us a lecture every day of our lives. Many animals, after a torpid state, scarcely distinguishable from death, recover the powers of life at the proper season by the influence of the sun: some after submersion in water during the whole winter. Some crawl for a time as helpless worms upon the earth, like ourselves; then they retire into a covering, which answers the end of a coffin or a sepulchre, wherein they are invisibly transformed, and come forth in glorious array, with wings and painted plumes, more like the inhabitants of heaven, than such worms as they were in their former earthly state. This transformation is so striking and pleasant an emblem of the present, the intermediate, and the glorified states of man, that people of the most remote antiquity, when they buried their dead, embalmed and enclosed them in an artificial covering, so figured and painted, as to resemble the caterpillar or silk-worm, in the intermediate state: and as Joseph was the first we read of that was embalmed in Egypt, where this manuer prevailed, it was very probably of Hebrew original.

The vicissitudes of night and day instruct

us farther on the same subject. The sun sets to rise again ; the year dies away into the winter, and rises to verdure and beauty in the spring. Sleep is a temporary death from which we daily awake ; insomuch that in many passages of the scripture sleep and death are the same thing, and he that *rises from the dead* is said to *awake out of sleep*.\* The furrow of the field is a grave, out of which the seeds that are buried rise to a new and better state. Their death and burial, which seems to be their end, is the beginning of their life : *It is not quickened except it die*. The allusion to plants and seeds is very common in the scripture, to illustrate the present and future state of man ; and if it reminds us, that *all flesh is grass*, and *all the goodliness thereof as the flower of the field* ; it makes us amends, by assuring us, that *our bones shall flourish as an herb*, and that *every seed shall have its own body*.

VIII. The destruction of the world by fire is the last doctrine I shall take occasion to speak of : which, though never unreasonable, and admitted even by Heathens of old time ; is now more apparent than ever, from the late improvements in experimental philosophy. Indeed, we may say, the world is already on fire : for as Sinai, with its smoke and flame, was a *positive*, so is every volcano a *natural*

\* See Dan. xii. 2.



prelude to the burning of the last day. The earth, the air, the clouds, the sea, are all replete with a subtile penetrating fire, which, while at rest, is neither felt nor observed, and was absolutely unknown to some of the most learned for ages ; till accidental discovery hath now laid open the treasures of fire in heaven and earth to all that have the use of their sight and senses. The publication of the philosophy of fire hath been so sudden and so universal, and is so wonderful in itself, that it seems to be second to the publication of the Gospel : at least, there is no event in philosophy or literature that comes nearer to it.

In this element we live and move ; and, perhaps, so far as our frame is mechanical, we are moved by it. When excited to action, it turns into a consuming fire, which no substance can exclude, no force can resist.—The matter of lightning, which seems to break out partially and accidentally, is now found to be constitutional and universal in the system of Nature ; so that the heavens, which, according to the language of the scripture, are to *melt with fervent heat*, want no foreign matter to convert them into fire. What is called *phlogiston* can rise in a moment from a state of quiescence to a state of inflammation ; and it discovers itself in many bodies where we should little expect to find it. The earth and

the works that are therein carry within them the seeds of their own destruction ; and may be burnt up by that element which now resides within them, and is only waiting for the word from its Creator.

Upon the whole then, philosophy, so far as the term signifies a knowledge of God's wisdom and power in the natural creation, which is the best sense of the word ; this philosophy, I say, is so far from being adverse to true religion, that with all the common evidences of Christianity in reserve, we may venture to meet the philosopher upon his own ground : we have nothing to fear from the testimony of Nature : we appeal to it : we call upon every man of science to compare the Gospel which God hath revealed with the world which God hath created ; under an assurance, that he will find *the latter* to be a *key unto the former*, as our noble philosopher hath well asserted. We have ventured to try this comparison upon the general plan of Christianity, and we see how it answers.

And if Nature answers to Christianity, it contradicts Deism : and that religion cannot be called *natural* which is contradicted by the light reflected upon our understandings from natural things. The Socinian is nearly in the same situation with the Deist ; and they may

both join together in calling upon Nature, from morning until night, as the Priests of Baal called upon their Deity; but there will be *none to answer*; and philosophy must put out one of his eyes before it can admit their doctrines. In short, take any religion but the Christian, and bring it to this test, by comparing it with the state of Nature, and it will be found destitute and defenceless. But the doctrines of our faith are attested by the whole natural world. Wherever we turn our eyes, to the heaven or to the earth, to the sea or the land, to men or to beasts, to animals or to plants, there we are reminded of them. They are recorded in a language which hath never been confounded; they are written in a text which shall never be corrupted.

The Creation of God is the School of Christians, if they use it aright. What is commonly called *the World*, consists of the forms, manners, diversions, pursuits, and prospects, of human society. But this is an artificial world, of man's making; the subject of his study, the object of his ambition. The natural world, of God's making, is full of wonder and instruction: it is open to all, it is common to all. Here there can be no envy, no party, no competition; for no man will have the less for what his neighbour possesses. The world, in this

sense, may be enjoyed without fraud or violence. The student in his solitary walk, the husbandman at his labour, the saint at his prayers, may have as much as they can desire, and have nothing to repent of: for they will thus draw nearer to God, because they will see farther into his truth, wisdom, and goodness.

Some have expressed their astonishment at the choice of hermits and men of retirement, as people who have fled from all the enjoyments of life; and consigned themselves to melancholy and misery. They are out of the world, it is true; but they are not only out of that artificial world of man's making, in which so many are hastening to disappointment and ruin: but they are still in that other better world of contemplation and devotion, which affords them all the pleasures and improvements of the mind, and is preparatory to a state of uninterrupted felicity.

Let us then, finally, give thanks to him, who to the light of his Gospel hath added this light of nature, and opened the wonderful volume of the creation before us, for the confirmation of his truth, and the illumination of his people; that we may thence know and

**368** *On the Natural Evidences of Christianity.*

*see the certainty of these things wherein we have been instructed.* As all his works are for our good, let it be our study and our wisdom to turn them all to his glory.

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THE END.

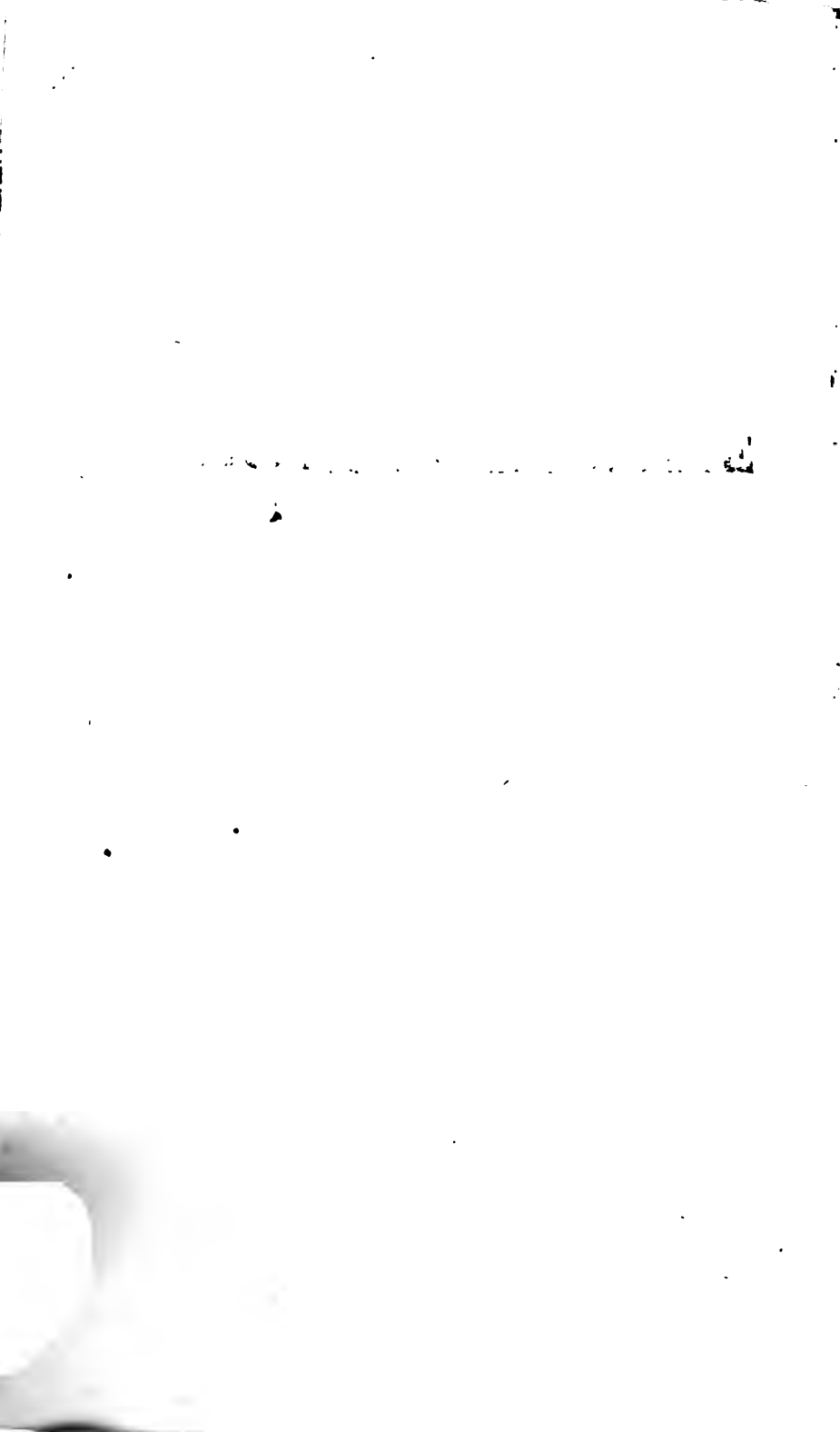
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